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The

SHAMROCK BATTALION OF THE RAINBOW

The
SHAMROCK BATTALION
♣ OF THE RAINBOW ♣

A STORY OF THE "FIGHTING SIXTY-NINTH"

BY

MARTIN J. HOGAN

Corporal, Co. K, 165th Infantry
U. S. A.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK LONDON
1919

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

FOREWORD

The battle training of the Sixty-ninth Regiment began in 1861 and continued through the war to 1865. During that period, the regiment fought many fights and won undying glory in the greatest battles of the Civil War. After 1865 the regiment continued as a National Guard Regiment until 1898 when again the country called for volunteers. The answer of Colonel Duffy of the Sixty-ninth was that 100 per cent. of his regiment volunteered. The Spanish-American War ended quickly and again the regiment took its place in the National Guard.

In 1916 affairs in Mexico were disturbed and the Sixty-ninth was the first regiment in the State called to the colors. After nine

months' faithful service at the border the regiment was back again in the National Guard, but only for four months.

In all the world's history no great and powerful nation ever tried so faithfully as did our nation to keep out of war, while the greatest, bloodiest war the world had ever known was raging over Europe. But at last in 1917 our country was drawn into the conflict. The record of the Sixty-ninth was remembered. It was called into the service in July and was the first regiment in all the United States filled up to the new fighting strength. Then began the grind of intensive training to prepare the regiment for the trying times awaiting it in France. The feeding, uniforming and equipping of the regiment was a mighty task. Close order drills, extended order drills, physical exercises, bayonet exercises, long marches with heavy packs, talks and lectures and studies,

and the tremendously important business of keeping themselves and their camp clean, all combined to make up a busy day for the men. It is likely the men often wondered whether the officers were trying to drill them to death or whether they were only crazy.

But some days there was enough fun thrown in to make life seem worth while after all. Boxing and football and cross-country races livened things up, the Giants came down to Garden City and played a game for us, John McCormack came to camp and sang for us; and again and again and again the battle history and the traditions of the regiment were talked of by the officers to the men so that when finally the day when we were to leave our beloved country and our loved ones here at home and go to fight in France, when that day came the regiment was ready.

The regiment reached France in Novem-

ber, 1917, and some of the things done there by one battalion are told in the story in this book. This is a simple, straightforward, soldier's story, an unaffected story of the front as one famous American regiment found the front. It is modestly told, and in it lives the soldier's viewpoint on the greatest of wars. It also reflects the spirit of understanding which pervaded the American troops.

T. J. MOYNAHAN,
Lieutenant-Colonel, Inf. U. S. Army,
Late Major Commanding 3d Bn., 69th Inf.

FOREWORD

The 165th Infantry, better known as the Sixty-ninth New York, had two turns in the trenches, and afterwards took part in all the major operations of the American Army, with an additional job on the Champagne front under the French. Company K of the Third or Shamrock Battalion had a part in every fight, and its surviving members bear more wound-stripes than those of any other company in the A. E. F. Corporal Martin J. Hogan had the unusual experience of being knocked out on three different fronts without ever missing a battle. He turned up eager and smiling whenever there was a new fight on, his disabling wound coming to him when the war was on its last legs.

It has been given to few soldiers to see as much of war in eighteen months as has fallen to this youthful New Yorker. He played

a man's part in all of it, and he here tells the story of his own experience with accuracy, force and graphic power, and with an added touch of modesty and humor which is altogether charming.

Our present interest in the war concerns itself less with descriptions of military operations than with its reaction on the minds and characters of the youth who took part in it. Corporal Hogan's story will be found by most people a more interesting, and in many ways a more valuable contribution to the history of the Great War than the report of a Major General.

JAMES M. HANLEY,
Chaplain of the Third Battalion, 165th Infantry

AUTHOR'S NOTE

My reason for writing this book is that the National Guard, officers and men, measured up to the highest standards of professional fighting men; and that any guardsman who went to France saw, therefore, enough winning American spirit in trying action to have any quantity of material for telling a story of interest to the American people.

Of course, the regulars and the marines did a glorious "bit." But that was a matter of course. Likewise, national army men, in tests of the spirit, compared to advantage with the best shock troops of the enemy. But it fell to the share of divisions of American guardsmen to bear the brunt of the great decisive fighting, and to prove

themselves therein as worthy of the renown of being "America's first line of defense" as British "Tommies" of the Colonial armies, long-trained poilus of France, Italian Bersaglieri, Prussian Guard, or other crack, practiced corps.

National guardsmen formed the Rainbow Division—my division—and there is no record of shrinking or blundering in all its nine months of hard fighting. It was well and ably officered; it was of continuous high spirits and good cheer; it was quick to learn and always willing, and it had an *esprit de corps* every whit as sustaining as any organization that fought on the World War fields. It epitomized the best of the best spirit in the world—the American spirit—and its story is a good story to tell, its traditions are part of the pride of every man that was in it. So much for my apology.

In closing this brief note, I must express

my warm gratitude to Chaplain Major Francis P. Duffy, who, just after his return with the regiment from Germany, paused in the midst of a hundred and one duties crowding upon him to read through my story against the chance creeping in of errors. I must likewise thank Lieutenant Colonel Timothy J. Moynahan, the "father" of the Shamrock Battalion, whose training at Camp Mills and in France and whose leadership on the line made this effective fighting organization and infused it with the spirit that never confesses to failure.

Chaplain Lieutenant James F. Hanley, chaplain of the Shamrock Battalion, a fighting father of his flock who "went over the top with the boys" every time the Shamrocks went into action and who never permitted himself to miss a point of danger and of vantage for giving encouragement from the Ourcq to the Argonne, has been kind enough

to write a foreword to the story of the Battalion, of all of whose deeds and trials he was close at hand observer and a partaker.

MARTIN J. HOGAN.

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WITH THE "FIGHTING IRISH"

CHAPTER I

ONE OF THE BEGINNINGS OF THE "RAINBOW" DIVISION

THE "Rainbow" Division was representative of America. It was a cross section of the whole people. There were boys from the country and from the greatest of cities. All branches of business, of industry, all professions, all classes, all racial strains were present. We were a complete exhibit of the life in the Great Republic, and, I think, we conclusively proved that American life is virile, enterprising, enduring.

Part of the story of the "Rainbow" Division, that of the "Fighting Irish," the 165th Infantry or the old 69th New York National Guard of high tradition and glorious service record, is the subject of my writ-

ing. I do not expect to be able to do my outfit or my pals full justice. My viewpoint is not sufficiently detached. Their hopes, their endeavors, their fears, their sorrows and their satisfactions were mine; thus, I cannot weigh these things with judgment.

The 69th had traditions to steel them for America's business, proud memories to live up to, but otherwise they were very raw soldier material. Many of us had never heard a gun shot; had never even considered the possibility of America at war. Despite all that had been published about the war, we had no picture of the reality. Our civilian tempers and training, according to German or French ideas, must have appeared most unpromising material out of which to make scientific fighters.

Many and odd motives brought us together in those first days of the war, when America was calling for volunteers. Some

joined to escape drudging work at home, others because their friends had joined, but most of us volunteered unknowing why. However, in the hearts of all, though in many dimly or all unconscious, there was an impelling sentiment to do America's service, to measure fully up before the world to our buoyant confidence in ourselves.

The 69th was federalized July 15, 1917. There was an intense recruiting campaign loosed upon the city to fill up its ranks, and a steady flow of applicants flowed through the Armory, many of them failing in their physical examinations; for with the 69th the regulation qualifying standards were strictly kept. The regiment filled up slowly.

The campaign in New York for volunteers for the regular army, the Marine Corps, the Navy and to fill up the ranks of the Guard grew daily more impetuous. Men from the National Guard regiments

spoke on street corners, from automobiles and motor trucks all over the city. Banners and posters calling for volunteers were put up everywhere. The call for men was sounded in theaters, in motion picture houses, and even in restaurants. It was impossible to escape hourly reminder of the urgency of Uncle Sam's demand.

The knowledge that Uncle Sam's business was my own and the feeling that I ought to enlist occupied my attention more and more. My married brother was already in the New York National Guard. He had gone to the border with the 23d Regiment of Brooklyn, and was preparing to go to France. Sergeant Thomas Joseph Hogan, Co. L, 23d Inf., N. Y. N. G., was full of a single purpose to serve the best of countries, and this made me doubly certain that I belonged to the New York Guard.

My mother and father were not living.

They had long been lost to me. I was seventeen, unmarried of course, and had no responsibilities to hold me back. I felt that I looked old enough to pass a recruiting sergeant and that the call for men was urgent enough to justify me in camouflaging my age by one year. Anyhow, I thought, I can go to France and grow up with the war.

In the midst of the intense recruiting campaign for the Guard, I was at the theater one night when a call was made for volunteers. During the speech of the recruiting agent, I made up my mind. He wound up by asking all the men willing to serve the country, to see her through her present emergency with rifles in hand, to step upon the stage. As I sat very near to the stage, I was the first to present myself. When I filled out my application, I chose the old 69th—because it and I were Irish.

Next morning we recruits of the night

before went to the armory. There we were taken in charge; passed through our physical examinations, and five of us were sent to Company K, Captain J. P. Hurley's company. All five of us were young; all about my age, and, when the Captain had been called out to look us over by the First Sergeant, his eyes traveled up and down our line, and he exclaimed: "What are we getting now, Sergeant, a Boy Scout outfit?"

However, later in France, I think the Captain grew just as satisfied with all members of our company as we were with our C. O., and he was as good a leader as the Army had in France.

Days of drilling followed, in the armory, and on vacant ground near the 23d street ferry. The school of a soldier, school of a squad, platoon, company and battalion formation, regulations and the bayonet manual were thoroughly ground into us. We

worked too hard to be able to waste much time in thinking ahead about the war.

We lived at home and reported at the armory in the mornings. Some of us induced our pals to join. My sister and aunt, with whom I lived, were sorry that I had determined to go, but they accepted the accomplished fact of my enlistment in the right Irish spirit and put no obstacles in my way.

On Monday, August 24, the 69th was mobilized in its armory. It was going to camp. Detachments of men from other regiments were received to bring it up to war strength. These were assigned, and we prepared to begin our long adventure with a parade.

The regiment formed at the armory, turned toward Fifth Avenue, and once again the old 69th was outward bound on Uncle Sam's duty, its least unit filled with

determination to represent the Old Gentleman effectively on whatever difficult mission might chance to fall to it.

We turned north on Fifth Avenue. Great crowds lined the way and there was tremendous war enthusiasm. The strong impressions that we men got from this march, however, were not those of the large, triumphant sort, of the cheering, of the affectionate calls of friends, of martial pride to know that we were on our way into a great, and probably glorious, adventure for home and country, but rather humbler impressions of a chastening sort, impressions of heartbroken mothers, wives, and sisters who tried to force their way by the police to kiss their "boy," a comrade in our ranks, good-by, of fathers who gulped out some choking word of love as their boys swung by with us. Seeing these heart-heavy dramas all along our line of march, I some-

how missed the exultant spirit of the crowd and was mostly near to tears myself.

We marched to Forty-eighth Street on Fifth Avenue, then took our way to the Thirty-fourth Street ferry, crossed to Long Island City, and entrained for Camp Mills.

There followed two tiresome months at Camp Mills, drilling, hardening up, and accustoming ourselves to the discipline that must rule in a fighting organization facing real war. Some of the transferred men from other regiments growled a bit that they were not to go with their old outfits, and this growling was about the only thing that broke the monotony of the camp work. These men, however, were glad later that they went with the "Fighting Irish." It proved an effective and right-hearted outfit right through to the end.

My friends at Mills, later, all were wounded. Thomas Hogan had his left foot

torn by shrapnel at Château Thierry. "Strapping" Hickey, whose less popular name was Stephen, a frail, slight lad who weighed only about twice as much as the pack he had to carry, was gassed when we went first into the lines at Lunéville. John Brawley was badly gassed twice, and the last time was in the hospital several months. William Burns, another pal, formerly of the old 12th of the N. Y. N. G., in January, before we had our first turn in the line, lost an eye through the premature explosion of a rifle grenade while practicing on the range. He was later placed in the Division of Supplies, and continued in Army service.

Camp Mills was nothing but routine. Reveille was sounded at 4:50 o'clock, and from then on until mess at 6 o'clock in the evening, we daily went through the same routine. This routine consisted of drill at

formations and bayonet practice without dummies. We did practically no shooting all the time we were at Mills. I think the popular idea of the amount of training that we of the "Rainbow" Division got over here was very greatly exaggerated.

One part of our training which our officers keenly followed out, and which undoubtedly proved of tremendous value when we got into the lines in France, was the setting-up exercises. It was due to the thorough way in which these exercises were daily given that the men were strengthened to withstand physically the hardships which they had to meet later. This training saved many a man among us from pneumonia and other diseases due to exposure and overstrain, and prepared us for the rapid work of action.

We had no trench building nor practice with gas masks here. This work came first

in France, and just before we moved to the front in a quiet sector, where we got our seasoning. Moreover, we had no rifle range at Mills, and such was the need for America's men "over there" that there was no time to fret over such trifling deficiencies in home training. I suppose our officers felt much as we did on that score—it's a mighty poor man who doesn't learn to shoot with a lot of savages over the way plugging merrily along at him.

CHAPTER II

THROUGH THE SUBMARINES

THERE was a peculiarly restless anticipation in our mood throughout our time of training at Camp Mills. Once underway, however, we lost this, and, from the day of our embarkation to that of our first big fight, this restlessness did not come back to us; for new impressions crowded themselves upon us much too quickly to leave it room.

It was a welcome change, our move from Mills. Life in the Long Island camp had been monotonous, not to say irksome, for most of us. Each day of our training was much like all other days, drills, mess, inspections, with the sound sleep of the weary at night. There were few passes given to leave camp, few moments of relaxation in the

haste of our training. Camp Mills, as I remember it, was drudgery, not adventure.

My battalion, the 3d battalion, which later made for itself a permanent niche in American history under the name of the "Shamrock Battalion," the last battalion of the regiment to break camp, left Mills on October 29. The 1st battalion left camp on the nineteenth and went to Montreal, whence they sailed to England. We took a different route.

We entrained for Long Island City. There was a buoyant spirit about us as we made ready to take up the "long, long trail." The men were in high fettle, full of that American merriment that enlivens the American man when bent on taking a chance. There were supermen in the deep and on the land waiting to make life interesting for us, so we felt that, at least, we would not suffer from dullness!

From Long Island City, we took the ferry over to Hoboken, and thence made our way to the Government piers, Pier 4, and embarked on the United States Transport *America.*

Once on board, many of the men discovered a strong longing to say good-by to friends and family; for, after all, this war, according to all the reports we had read of it, was a most terribly serious adventure, into which millions might be thrown and but few come out alive. Many of us felt that it was a vain and willful optimism to think that we should survive it, and, thus, many of us were bitterly disappointed that we could not tell mothers and wives "good-by."

Tuesday our transport made its way up the river to an anchorage opposite Ninety-second street. This led many of us to think that we were destined to wait in port several days before steaming, probably for the mak-

ing up of a convoy. Or, as one of the men sagely suggested:

"They're going to take us to the Catskills and send us after old 'Heinie' Hudson and his gang."

Next morning we woke to the rhythmic motion of the ship, and discovered to our blank astonishment that we were at sea and out of sight of land. The *America* had started late the night before.

Homesickness immediately made its appearance in our ranks. One man said that he felt altogether too much like "being sneaked away to the shambles like some prime Texas steer," a number grumbled that we should have been given a chance, at least, to take "a last eyeful" of New York's skyline and of Liberty. However, we all knew in our hearts that whatever military precautions were taken were necessary, and many of us, as we leaned over the rail and

took our first view of the Big Water from the deck of an ocean boat, forgot our disappointment in the thought that the "Fighting Irish" belonged to the Flag again and that they must live up to themselves.

There were four ships with us. A few days out we picked up our convoyers, the reassuring battleship *South Carolina* and a few sharp-visaged, wasp-like submarine chasers. The smaller boats were stationed, one on each side ahead and one on each side behind, and thus they danced along with us day after day, merrily, arrogantly, scornful of the German sea-adders said to be infesting all the deeper waters of the North Atlantic.

There was much discussion of the submarines among the men. Bets were laid upon our chances for coming through alive, the odd negatives to these bets little stopping to consider what they would do with

the money they won in case their expectations came to pass. The submarine discussions always reached their high points following life-belt and lifeboat drills.

There were few grounds for complaint on that voyage over, meals were excellent, quarters were comfortable, and the weather was all that could be desired. Discipline was relaxed somewhat. The men had plenty of time to themselves, and played games or read the magazines and books which had been liberally supplied for us by the Knights of Columbus and other organizations. We had plenty of time to ourselves, but that time did not hang heavily on our hands.

The favorite theme of innumerable conversations which helped to pass away the time on that voyage was of the day when we would be coming back. How all the details of that day were planned over and over again, and some of the plans were, I'm

afraid, much more colorful in conception than the reality will prove for those who designed them. We took great cheer and comfort in imagining the details of that day of home-coming. And right here I want to say that there was not a downcast man in the 165th, nor a single man who did not know that the "Fighting Irish" were coming home triumphant.

There was a bit of adventure on our eighth night out. Part of this adventure was of a melancholy kind, that of catching a spy. Early in the evening a submarine alarm was sent around. It was said that a U-boat was in our neighborhood, and the men were ordered below to put on life-preservers and to hold themselves in readiness to be on deck at a moment's notice.

The men tumbled below in jesting, disrespectful disorder. The frivolous way in which they received the knowledge of the

nearness of the enemy undersea boat would have made its commander blush a burning blush could he have heard their comments. Our U-boat failed to materialize.

The other part of the night's adventure, that of the catching of the spy, affected us much more unpleasantly. The story that passed among the men was that a soldier on the deck had marked on several turnings the quick glare of an electric flash pointing out from the ship's side. The ribbon of light would stream quickly out from one of the lifeboats on deck, waver a moment through the darkness, and then quench again. This worried the soldier; for, though he supposed this was all in order and some nautical custom of legitimate end, he, nevertheless, felt that it did not square with the strict regulations against showing light at night.

After one or two turns up and down the deck, he called the attention of a sailor to

the flashes. The sailor, thereupon, immediately called a small detail of brother "gobs"; investigated the interior of the lifeboat; found an officer with a flashlight in his hand therein, and put him under arrest.

It sort of humiliated us to know that we had harbored a spy on the same ship with us.

The naval gunners held practice once or twice on the way over. These small naval guns were the first that most of us had ever heard, and the practices commanded our respectful attention on each performance, not to say that noisy barkings caused us some moments of thoughtfulness. These guns, however, were silent and sober things compared to the terrible barrages that were to rake our souls into livid aching turmoil later on the battlefields of France.

The first time the naval guns spoke, one of my pals turned to another with a laugh and said:

"Too bad, old man, you're not coming back with us. But don't worry, I'll parade for both of us when I get back."

And he shook hands soberly with his victim.

Our voyage lasted ten days. For the most part, it was a careless, pleasant time. There was some homesickness and some seasickness and some rather untempered jesting, but on the whole each one of us enjoyed every league of the journey.

Nearing England, we steered toward the south, around the edge of greatest submarine frequency, so to speak, and made for the port of Brest. Needless to say, the "Shamrock Battalion" spent hours staring over the water to catch some glimpse of Ireland when they knew they were in waters that washed that Isle, but we went far to the southward and their patience was not rewarded.

CHAPTER III

TIGHTENING BELTS FOR THE FRONT

THE "Shamrock Battalion" did not make a dramatic entry into France. Such may have been the experience of organizations gone before and others that came after us. Our entry, however, was melancholy in its sobriety and lack of color. Weather, a long quarantine and press of business conspired to make the setting foot upon the land of our adventure a most tame experience.

We moored off Brest early in a cheerless, chilly, pea-soup foggy morning. The whole battalion gathered on deck and shivered and studied the fog in vain to make out the land of France. The throb of the ship's engines ceased; the men were preoccupied and silent; the fog was impenetrable and oppressive.

To make matters worse, our money wherewith to buy tobacco was giving out—we had not been paid before we left,—so that many of us were running low in that rare stimulant of philosophic imperturbability.

Then we learned that we were to be quarantined on the ship for ten days. It was a sorrowful prospect. Here was France, and the object of our mission lay just ahead of us, while we must remain marooned in a fog bank in a chill and dreary harbor for more than a week!

During the days of quarantine, the youngsters of Brest often put out about our ship in small boats, and we amused ourselves by throwing them American pennies and American cigarettes. Parties of French sailors came out to visit us, and, I am persuaded, the American-French entente was furthered by some of the worst French ever heard until then.

There were a number of men among us who had a flirting knowledge of French, and presumed, in consequence of this, to act as interpreters for us with our French visitors. Equipped with these interpreters, groups of us would ply the visiting sailors with all manner of questions about conditions at the front, but, due to the slender resources of our media for the interchange of thoughts, about all that we succeeded in learning was that the war was still going on.

The battalion disembarked November 21. It was carried from the ship to the wharf on tugs and lighters, which made their cautious ways to shore through the heavy fog blanket which seems to be the rule at Brest. We found French sailors and American marines patrolling the water front. The pier on which we landed was primitive. There was little about this sleepy little port that impressed us except its fogs.

It was on a Sunday morning that we landed. Our movement from the ship was carried out expeditiously, and we had scarcely time to look around us on the water front before we were formed at the pier and marched to the railway station, where we were confronted with the famous French military "Pullmans" in which we were to do many hundred weary kilometers ere our trick in France was done. The men called these box cars "Pullmans for forty hommies (hommes) and eight chevoos (chevaux)."

Three days' rations were distributed—corned willie and hard tack—and about noontime loaded into our box cars in the proper proportions of "hommies" to a car, our train, uttering a shrill protest or two, started us into France.

It was a dull trip. I don't know how forty hommies make out in a French box car, but I do know that forty men find it fairly

crowded. The night was bitterly chill, and we spent it sitting up or sprawling over one another on the floor of our box cars. Some one in my car took all the joy out of life by repeating at cheerless intervals:

"You'll see. We'll have a week of this before we get there."

Cigarettes by this time were about exhausted, and they were the only comforts we had. The moment the lucky possessor of a cigarette lighted it, a dozen crowded around him and asked for a turn at its soothing vapor. One never appreciates the value of tobacco until one is forced to pass hours of consistent and unrelieved discomfort.

With morning came mess, corned willie and hard tack, and many disgusted grunts as cramped muscles were rubbed and flexed. About noon we stopped at a small French station, climbed out of our cars and were given hot coffee by the French Red Cross.

War had taken much from the quality of the famed coffee of France, and, though it was very welcome and eagerly drunk, this coffee tasted strongly like burned grain boiled in water.

Our trip continued for many hours, and its monotony was broken only by meals of corned willie (seven men to a one-pound can at each meal) and hard tack and occasional hot coffee. This trip was not a cheerful experience, but at that it was the most comfortable trip that we were to take in France.

There was little to see from our box cars. In the day we kept the doors open, but closed them against the cold dampness of the nights. Old women and small children at work in the fields and villages would wave to us and cheer. The old women bending over men's hard tasks seemed most pathetic.

The battalion reached the end of this uncomfortable journey about four o'clock in

the morning of the third day, and at five o'clock all members were in the best of humor out in the cold sleet over hot coffee, corned willie and hard tack. The fearsome French Pullmans were things of the past, and happiness remains just as relative a thing when campaigning as when in civilian life amid peaceful pursuits.

Corned willie eaten in the first flush of relief after a fatiguing journey in European box cars tastes as good as the gourmand's caviar and the fresh out-of-doors has a welcome feel at such times whether or not it is filled with sleet or drizzling rain.

We hiked from the station to our headquarters, a very small village that was filled with mud and despair. The streets of this place had never been cleaned and so, in the rainy season, one plowed deep through generations of refuse and pollution. Even the

cows, pigs and geese seemed depressed over the condition of the place.

We were billeted here on the people and live stock. There were few people left in the village. The men, young and old, were away, taking their various parts in the war, as were the younger women. Those who remained seemed worn and indifferent. They were kindly enough when we met them, but kept most to themselves and their sorrows. Most of them wore the symbols of mourning, and certainly their village wore the appearance of black, tragic neglect.

Life dragged here. We were drilled in the sodden fields adjacent to the village each day from 8 A. M. to 11:30 A. M. and from 1 P. M. until 3 P. M. We wore trails of our own through the village mud. We made friends with the live stock, taught the pigs manners and trained even the simple geese in ways more sophisticated. We speculated

about our next move and when it would come.

Finally, a week before Christmas, there came a sixty-mile hike that was to remain green in the memories of the men who made it. As hikes go, it had rarely unpleasant features.

The first night out was spent in haymows and barns; but there was straw a-plenty and roofs on the barns, so the quarters were all that tired men required. The first night, however, was almost the high point of the hike's luxury.

The hard going came upon us after Christmas, by way of contrast necessary to morale, I suppose, with the really fine Christmas cheer that our army provided for us in the obscure little French village where the day overtook us.

Under way next morning at eight o'clock, the battalion made fourteen miles through

fresh, crisp air to the village where we were to spend Christmas eve and day. At this place we had comfortable quarters and French army cots. Moreover, the ground had hardened a bit from the cold which added considerable to the good humor with which we greeted our first Christmas on campaign.

A heavy snow set in the day before Christmas. It was as though a kindly disposed Fate was to make this last Christmas that many among us should know a good old-fashioned one. The white Christmas snow and the turkey dinner next day made everything quite complete.

The first and second battalions were with us again, being quartered in nearby towns. It was from this Christmas that the 165th, the old "Fighting Irish," got its collective nose pointed for the front.

Father Duffy, the friend, adviser and

guide of every man in the regiment, whose splendid example in the tortured line of battle steeled all who loved him to overcome temporary disordered nerves, celebrated a midnight mass for the regiment on Christmas eve, and the little chapel where these services were held was crowded with men until I thought that its sides would be pushed outward.

Right here I want to make a comment for the benefit of the loved ones and friends who speculated so often with anxious care about their member with the A. E. F. on foreign duty. It is a rare man who faces the searching agonies of modern war who forgets his God, or who, if he has forgotten Him in weaker times, does not renew his faith; and it is a still more rare man among such who speaks of this.

Christmas breakfast was a bacon sandwich and hot coffee. Then came the surprise

of the day. Our first mail had reached us. There were packages for many and wonderful letters from home. Both were shared among all the pals of each recipient. The men who failed to receive some token or letter from home appeared mournfully lonesome, and the eagerness with which they shared in the messages of endearment and the home gossip sent to their friends can only be understood by the campaigner who has come empty handed from the distribution of mail in the field.

I received a letter from my sister, which I read and re-read that morning until I knew it by heart. Each time I saw a pal reading his letter from home I took mine out and proceeded to read it again. I wanted to impress on him that I, too, had not been forgotten. And then, chances were, we would get together and swap home gossip.

At mid-day mess, the army proved itself a

first-rate caterer when it had a mind to undertake the task. There were turkey, chicken, cranberries, mashed potatoes, carrots, bread pudding, nuts, figs and coffee on the menu, and the cookie earned the respectful regard of all the way he displayed his talents when rich meal ingredients were given into his hands. He produced a bounteous and masterful repast, which I, at least, dreamed many a regretful dream about in subsequent campaigning.

We were free all day Christmas. And all things conspired to make this one of the happiest days in the army life of most of us. There was even a holiday taste about our evening mess of boiled beef and mashed potatoes.

The day after Christmas we rolled our packs and made ready to finish the hike. It had been snowing for three days, and this morning the roads were knee-deep. It was

still snowing when we broke camp at nine o'clock, and a head-on wind blew the sharp crystals into our faces and eyes. The marching, of course, was very difficult, and when we stopped to eat at noon the sandwich which had been given to us in the morning most of us were thoroughly tired.

The going was painful in the afternoon. Our packs seemed to weigh tons and our boots seemed to lift other tons every time we pulled them up out of the snow to step ahead. That night when we had reached the small town which was our destination mess call was blown but there was nothing to eat. Our kitchens had stuck in the soft mud and snow far behind us.

Our way station of that night was a village that had fallen sadly into neglect during the years of the war, as, indeed, had most villages in this part of France behind the Lorraine sector. The barns and outbuild-

ings were roofless, or covered with gashed and rotten roofwork, and the houses were shabby and in ill repair. In these cold, damp and cheerless ruins we put up for the night.

The shed in which I slept that night had no roof over it, and I lay for a long time, fully dressed, with my blanket over me, staring at the cold stars. When I woke in the cold, dark morning the same stars were staring idly back at me.

Mess call was sounded again that morning, but there was nothing to eat. Our kitchens were still glued and frozen fast down the road. All awoke hungry and cramped from the cold, damp quarters. Some were suffering from swollen, sore and cracked feet. Some had caught colds. Many of these answered sick call, in the hope that they would be sent to the hospital for food and rest. The doctor, however, knowing

that the men must stand to the march despite a little hardship, discouraged all applicants.

That noon we fell down limply into the snow by the wayside for a half hour's rest. The officers called it a "fall out for mess," which was a fair description but for the fact that mess was missing. By this time, however, we were too acutely hungry and too weakened by lack of food to appreciate the humor of our messless mess calls.

A few left the lines in passing through French villages to beg for a bit of food. They ate even raw potatoes when these were given to them. This begging was dangerous, because the men doing so ran the chance of being caught and heavily fined. Still, most of us were hungry enough to eat Boche raw, had one presented himself.

Boys fell by the way in this last day of the "hike" and lay exhausted in the wet snow.

till the ambulances bore them off. Some developed pneumonia. Others had their feet frozen. Still others just caught bad colds and coughs.

Night came on as a welcome deliverance from the miseries of that tramp in weakened, famished condition through the heavy, clinging snows, a-stagger under our full equipment. We again put up in a town from whose sheds and outbuildings most of the roofs were missing, and in these we had to seek our rest.

Mess call was sounded again that night, merely as a matter of form. There wasn't a blessed thing to eat. We crawled into our cheerless quarters, and prepared to get some sleep, many of us wondering how much longer we could "carry on" without food. Most of us, I suppose,—at least, this was my case —spent the night dreaming of all the differ-

ent good things that had ever been served to us at table.

I was quartered in a broken stable, whose smell was the heaviest and most oppressive imaginable. It was a raw smell, a raw night, and my feet and my stomach felt raw. However, when sleep came, I made up for all this by eating, eating, eating fabulously good meals all up and down Broadway.

Let me add, as a kind of a footnote, that our officers fared no better than we did. They shared the same hard fortunes of campaigning through those days of hard hiking and no meals, and they set an example of cheerfulness with no grumbling. Moreover, our hardship was not the fault of others, but of weather conditions, bad beyond expectation, which had made it physically impossible for our kitchens to catch up with us.

Next morning early the missing kitchens came sprawling along into our village, and

the hardships of the march were at an end. There was not much for that breakfast, only a slice of bread and a raw potato for each of us, but it put heart into us. The captain of our company who had been greatly worried on our account, however, put off innumerable small wrinkles from his face when he saw this ration being served.

It had caused the officers great concern to see the men dropping here and there in the snow from hunger-weakness and from disease. Some of these men, they knew, might lie in the snow for hours before being picked up, and this exposure could well result in fatal pneumonia and influenza cases. Many of the men did catch pneumonia on this march.

That noon, when we fell out for mess, there was served to us a cup of hot coffee—the first hot drink in three days—and a bacon sandwich; and these simple things tasted

better to me than any meal that I have eaten before or after that "hike." The greasy bacon was turkey and plum pudding, caviar and terrapin to us.

The battalion made another deserted village that night, by courtesy only a war-neglected town. Here luxury for us was in the ascendant again. We made a mess of a boiled potato and a slice of bacon, and we slept in comfortable haymows with plenty of straw in them.

Altogether we were so comfortable here that some of the men, by way of a fitting dessert, started the rumor that we would reach the end of our tramp next day. It was not accepted for more than rumor value, however, for it had been going the rounds in the ranks ever since the break in our luck had started.

Before starting out next morning, Captain Hurley, much to our satisfaction, con-

firmed the after-supper rumor. "We'll reach our destination about noon to-day," he said, which started us on our way in joshing mood and at a brisk clip.

There were those among us who always insisted upon being skeptical about everything which a kind Fate seemed willing to do for us, and this time they were right. We did not reach our objective that noon.

The going was hard. It had stopped snowing, and a rising thermometer made the surface snow clammy and sticky and the mud beneath thick and gummy. Under such conditions it is no great comfort to keep swinging along at the regular army time in heavy marching order. The sun came out late in the morning; the snow melted more rapidly, and the roads became viciously hard.

At noon, we paused in the muddy snow outside of Langres, quite a bit south of Chaumont where were General Pershing's

headquarters, a rather large French town as towns went which our battalion saw while in France, and thought that this was the end of the trail. We were disappointed. We had mess, and then about one o'clock were started again, and soon the larger city was swallowed up in lonesome country.

Well, after midday, about spent and thoroughly disgusted, we reached a long hill and climbed for an hour or more, one of the most wearisome walks I have ever made. The boys took this hill without a rest, either a break in the marching or a break in their disgruntled comment.

Several miles beyond the other side of the hill, the battalion entered into Baissey, a dreary row or so of dilapidated dwellings and barns, with a few lively geese and pigs. This was to be our home, where we were to get our first so-called "intensive training," until we should start for the front.

We had heard a good deal about intensive training, about gas drills, trench digging, barbed wire stringing, grenade throwing, and other new wrinkles in warfare. To say that we were eager to begin our studies of these things would be putting our interest mildly.

Despite the unfavorable impression which the first sight of the town had made upon us, we found here an unexpected degree of comfort. We were billeted in the village homes, and some of us had beds, some cots and some soft piles of fresh straw. Still, by this time we were not nearly so particular about beds as we were about roofs.

For a few days we were allowed to rest up, and were, moreover, well fed. This more than anything else reconciled us to the place. It built up pleasant associations against the unhappy background of the hard march down. The rest and the food were

not only needed by ourselves but also by our "cootie" boarders, who had become mighty scrawny on the poor entertainment that we had been able to furnish them with while on the rationless hike. With the return of better times, the cooties became more active. They had their own systems of intensive drilling, and they practiced all things upon us during the night, which they had learned with us in the day.

One had to be dead tired to fall asleep while these "critters" were performing, in fact, I believe the cooties thought that it depended upon their unremittent exertions alone to win the war!

Our days of rest soon passed, and we settled down to learn all the fine points of the exciting game that we were to play against the world's most famed army. We trained hard and earnestly. Proficiency meant life; it meant an earlier end to the gruesome

game; it meant success for that army whose banners Victory has never failed to crown with the laurel.

There was incessant bayonet drill, and this stood us in good stead in many a tight place later. The officers of our battalion were especially insistent upon individual skill in this work; for they looked forward, not so much to trench-hugging, as to persistent and irresistible "grips" with the enemy. Therefore, hours and hours were spent in perfecting ourselves for hard hand-to-hand fighting. I have gone through the bayonet manual in this little French village day after day until I nearly dropped from exhaustion. When I think of Baissey, I think of "long point and butt-stroke."

We also had thorough working out on the rifle range, and developed some really fine shots. We were on the range several days a week, but, nevertheless, could have made

good use of many more months of this practice.

Then there was trench digging. It does not take a soldier who had not been a subway builder long to get his fill of this practice exercise, though it is astonishing to see the amount of goodwill one will throw into the digging of a trench under the inspiration of a raking enemy machine-gun and shell fire.

We laid out systems of trenches. We dug individual shelter pits. And, with the heartiness that belongs more especially in this game to the drill field, we practiced "going over the top."

This toughening work, this post graduate course for the profession we were about to follow, this tightening of belts, was followed out vigorously in the fields near this quiet village until the first week in February, when we started for the front.

CHAPTER IV

WE LEARN THE SONG OF THE GUNS

NEARLY a week before the day set, we learned that we were to break camp and go to the front. The men were glad that the monotony of training was over; they were eager to test practically the things they had learned, and, though many of us may have had certain misgivings in private, in public we were all enthusiasm. The only expressed care was over the distance of the "hike" which lay ahead of us.

Captain Hurley gave us a cheery talk on the morning that we started. He reminded us that the serious business of our mission was just before us, and told us that he was confident that we would fully live up to the record of the Regiment. The only possible

course for American troops in action, he said, was to stay, whatever might come, with faces toward the enemy.

The Captain's talk was cheery, though, it seems, I have remembered only the earnest parts. At any rate, it put us in good spirits, though it sobered too, and filled the men with a determination to carry the old war banners of the Regiment higher than ever. We knew we were in for the business, and we felt that we would see it through.

There were some tedious inspections and waiting after the morning mess; the waiting especially was tedious. We started out with heavy packs, with gas masks, French and English, swung from our shoulders and with two extra bandoliers of ammunition, making a total of 320 rounds to each man. Some men received automatic rifles. We all had two days' rations. Besides this, each carried his own intrenching tool, and these things

summed up to a considerable weight. My own equipment and pack weighed almost as much as I did.

The first and second battalions had preceded us by different routes some days earlier. We finally got away from our village about one o'clock in the afternoon, a light-hearted, brisk-marching organization, glad that the days of training were over and the days of work at hand.

The ten miles back to Langres passed easily, despite the heavy packs. Langres was filled with our men, as it was an American A. C. S. (Army Candidate School.) The battalion reached here by nightfall, and fell out by the roadside near the station, where good old army Irish stew was served before entraining.

About an hour later, we boarded French side-door Pullmans, forty "hommies" of us

to each—we had no *chevaux*—and waited around the station until about midnight.

The wait was unpleasant. Our boarders, the cooties, seemed to become especially restless in the close atmosphere of the box cars, and each little cootie had a way of protesting all his own. Now when forty men roll around the hard floor of a dark box car, all scratching violently together, the resulting medley is not an inspiring one. Moreover, some of the men cussed, some sang, and others strained their imaginations, picturing for the cheer of all of us the horrors of the Front, that tremendous, mysterious land in whose life we were soon to share.

Our box cars rattled and swayed along through the night, and, when we awoke, they were still snaking us northward and eastward. An extra ration of corned willie and hard tack had been served at the station the night before, and this was our breakfast.

We kept on going until about noon, when we reached the first town in France about which any of us had ever heard anything back in America—Lunéville. We knew we were at the front.

There was a superstition among us by this time that all France was composed of nothing but shabby little towns, where pigs brooded in melancholy in the muddy streets and cows parked themselves on the sidewalks. Lunéville was a sensation to us. It was quite a respectable village, with more life in it than any place in our French experience.

The men cheered up considerable to see something of a city again, and most of us had visions of a tour in the trenches to be followed by night passes for motion picture shows and, possibly, dances.

Our rejoicing was premature. The train pulled out of Lunéville and we left it at a

tiny and tumble-down village. Here, when we left the train we marked the distant mumble of the guns. There was an instant's depression, an instant of sharp realization of the test ahead as we listened. It is an odd, and not comfortable, feeling, when one first hears the guns when one is journeying toward the country which they dominate. It is quite indescribable; one has to experience the feeling properly to gauge such a moment.

From the place of detrainment the battalion was marched to a little farm, a dreary, war-torn little farm, though the German had not swept quite this far.

There were a group of moldering buildings here; to each company one of these was assigned. In the courtyard were many great heaps of barbed wire which we noted curiously, thinking that this material had been assembled for purposes of our further train-

ing. Also, in the vicinity of the farm opposing trench systems had been cut, and these were like running sores over the face of the meadow field.

We got into our billets about six o'clock in the evening, gathering up large bundles of straw for our beds. We had a light meal and turned in.

This was the first night that we could wake up and hear the beat of the angry guns. Some of us got up and watched their flares, and listened. Outside it was cold and a drizzly rain was falling. Over there before us was the enemy, and to those of us with imagination his guns seemed to be calling to us tauntingly. One had the uneasy feeling that the next shell, or the next, might reach us. But we were far beyond the range that night.

I was very tired. I tried to keep awake so that I could get away quickly from any shell

that came along, but could not, and was soon deep in a healthful sleep. My last conscious thought was: Why worry about anything again until I am back behind sheltering old Liberty in New York Bay?

There was drill bright and early next day. After mess at six o'clock, we went hard at final work of getting in trim to trim the Germans.

The ground was very wet, and the old, water-sodden trenches gave us a very fair foretaste of the displeasures of trench life in the off-seasons. We had bayonet drill. We practiced "going over the top." We dug new trenches beside those which the French had made when they used this farm as a training camp. We also had a try at getting through diabolically strung barbed wire.

The excitement and annoyance of working one's way quickly through a well-made

barbed wire entanglement are all that has been claimed by the most vivid of war writings. It was the most disagreeable work of our training. Some of us got our skin and clothes badly torn in the practice, and then had the pleasure of sitting up half the night and sewing things up again by candle-light. And this work was not accomplished without much joshing on the part of the more fortunate.

"You'll get worse than that before you are through with this joy party," was a favorite encouraging remark.

The drills on the farm lasted about a week, and we moved back into Lunéville for a week's stay. Here it was living in clover. For the first time we took a regular, old-fashioned interest in life again. Discipline was easy. We went to picture shows and restaurants. Some of us promenaded dumbly up and down with French girls.

Some of us became engaged. Some of us, even, set about learning French.

"Voulez-vous promenade avec moi ce soir?" was our conventional approach toward half an hour's feminine companioncy. This was spoken: *"Vooles voos promenade* (the ade like lemonade) *avec moy se soyr?"*

The whole conversation of our stroll was accomplished by speaking with various accents and intonations two set questions, over and over again at intervals proper to a flowing conversation, and these questions we did fairly well: *"Parlez-vous Anglais?"* and *"Parlez-vous Americaine?"* *"Non,"* was the invariable, but lively and entertaining retort.

We, some of us, didn't venture this far into the unknown land of the French language. We would walk a girl up and down the street, silent and satisfied. Others showed such flights of fancy as "trays beans"

and "bocoo mercee." It was a sufficient change in our monotonous social world if she just "voulezed" to walk with us.

Now and then one of the girls would invite some of the boys to her home, and then there was a polishing up that took all spare moments until the time of the event. This meant home folks, a cloth upon the table, a pleasant-faced motherly head of the table for a treat, a kindly, fresh-eyed girl, a rare treat, though we could not understand her; and it meant cheese and bread and vin rouge, the singing of French songs after supper and the roaring forth of American ragtime.

These were evenings of genuine American-French entente cordiale, and they are good to look back upon, the pleasantest memories which our mission gave to us.

We were well treated in these French homes, that is, those of us who got the opportunity to enter them. They are a rarely

kindly womankind, French women, when they have the will to show others friendliness, and these women of Lunéville brought sweet memories of home sharply back to many of us.

They would show us photographs of their husbands and sons, four years in the war. They, perhaps, would also show us a picture of the eldest daughter who had joined her brothers staunchly in the service of France, and who, now, as a Red Cross nurse was doing arduous and generous service.

A number of the boys in my battalion became so fervently impressed with the virtues and the charms of French women that they addressed a number of surprised mothers in letters painfully prepared for permission to woo and wed their daughters. Some, I believe, married French girls, and, I doubt not, that the wives they gained made worth while all their sufferings in France.

CHAPTER V

OUR FIRST FIGHTING

AFTER a happy week at Lunéville, we decided that war was great sport. We had just time to make this decision, however, when we were moved nearer to the front, to a place called Camp New York, three miles behind the first-line trenches. The second battalion was up in the line, holding the trenches in front of us.

This sector was known as a quiet sector. It fully deserved this characterization—it was a sleepy sector, in fact—until the "Fighting Irish" became at home therein. Then this part of the line lost considerable of its quiet and comfort. When our battalion reached the line the Germans laid

themselves out to greet us with a thoroughly up-to-the-minute strafing.

Camp New York was the muddiest camp in France. It oozed, slopped, quivered and trickled. It slipped down our backs, matted our hair, got into our eyes and savored our food. We floundered and splashed and chunked through its wallows. We reveled in mud like turtles and ground hogs.

Narrow board walks ran through the camp. Every time two met upon these mud rails one had to step off into quagmire up to his knees. Sometimes one would slip off the greasy boards at night, when one might land head first in the ooze and have to spend five minutes wriggling his head loose from its embrace.

We slept in barracks here in double-decker rows of cots. Inside these barracks it was about as uncomfortable as out of doors. The mud tracked in and plastered around every-

where. I often caught myself waking at night, a-chewing away on choice pieces of grit that had hidden themselves away in my throat in the daytime or had shaken off my pallet into my mouth during the night. Camp New York was war again.

There was little drill here. We were under enemy observation, and kept in during the daytime. We had no lights at night. The barracks were camouflaged with tree branches, though this did not add much to our feeling of security when enemy planes buzzed overhead.

Outposts were maintained and machine guns were posted for repelling enemy flying-craft. When a plane was sighted away over in the gray of the horizon, the bugle would sound "attention," and every man was supposed to remain motionless. Immediate notice was given to the French and American batteries in the rear of the approach of the

hostile aircraft, with its location. It was here that we saw the first machine shot down.

There was regular gas mask drill in the barracks, and some of the men got into such form that they could get their masks on in about four seconds, the difference of a second or more was the difference between life and death on occasion at the front, and, knowing this, we all tried to do well at this drill.

Two dragging days passed. The guns droned louder in this new position, which fact heightened the irksomeness of our confinement. On the third day we were called to dig a trench, at which we suffered our first casualties, and, in a small way, became a "blooded organization." The casualties were very light.

The trench was for the laying of a concealed telephone line to the front. We went

at this work with our picks and shovels, but somehow the speaking of the German guns made us jumpy and nervous enough to retard the work considerably. We did not finish the stint.

There is a strange transformation that the soldier undergoes. The report of any gun, at first, makes him jumpy, but the report of his own guns—these being nearer usually—make him jumpiest of all. But when he becomes acclimated, becomes accustomed to the work at the front, there is nothing that adds to his peace of mind and contentment like the crack of his own guns near at hand. When your own guns are belching a heavy torrent of steel over your heads, you, if you are a seasoned campaigner, sleep a sweet sleep that knows no dreams.

Saturday we had our first go at the trench job. That night the planes droned above us all night long, but laid no "eggs" upon our

dismal, mud-drenched nest. I suppose they thought that life in such a place was its own punishment, was "offensive" enough to keep down the nimblest of spirits.

Sunday morning Father Duffy said mass for the men. He told us in simple soldier language which he used so well and with which he helped us steady ourselves often later in writhing line of battle, and told us we were "up against our great task now and must not miss a trick." He also told us how our first and second battalions had stoically taken their first "bits" in the trenches.

After the talk, we assembled again, some with rifles and belts, and some with picks and shovels, and started out to finish the work we had begun Saturday.

Hardly had we fallen to on the task when the Germans spotted us and began shelling. Some of us became nervous, while others

took it quietly. The guns, now, were speaking for our especial benefit.

Once or twice we broke for cover. The enemy was using shrapnel and high explosives. There was a little hill not far away, and to this a number of us ran after a particularly ugly burst of shelling. From here we could see the German lines and far behind them. The German positions looked so close and simple that one of the boys said:

"It's a wonder that we can't start over there to-day and take them."

Some of the men were wounded by one of the outbursts of the enemy guns. Their wounds, however, were slight. There is a peculiar feeling of reassurance that comes with the first wound, provided this wound is not a dangerous one, and those who were struck this Sunday morning straightway lost all their interest in the German fire. We finished our work that day.

Monday was a day of rest, cooped up in barracks. The next day, however, we were told to pack up and get ready for the front. We were called at two o'clock Wednesday morning, and about four o'clock, still dark, a cold and clear night, we started up for the trenches. There is no thrill in life, I think, that can compare with that one feels on his first march to a battle front.

The way lay through the woods. The guns had gone to sleep. There was a fearsome hush over us. All that we heard was the pound of the heavy army shoes now and again in the underbrush. The going on the path was noiseless; for it was damp and springy.

At the end of a considerable walk, we came to a densely wooded stretch, and here we rested. It was just dusk. There were no signs of man around; we might have been in the midst of a wilderness; yet we learned

that we were at the first line. We were led in single file through a communication trench, still doubting that we had reached the famous line of earthworks which swung from Switzerland to the sea.

The men of the second battalion were glad to be relieved. They told us that the place was quiet, but that they could see German snipers once in a while. It had been a still more quiet sector, they told us, when the first battalion had first taken it over from the French, but that it had livened up some since the Irish had been in possession.

We slipped into our places in sober mood. Each man of us was imagining all he could, and his imaginings were bringing him mighty little comfort. Some of us heard ominous things; others thought they saw such. The shells, beginning now in a desultory way, worried us.

The man whom I relieved advised me to

keep my head low, and I made myself a devout promise that I would follow his advice. He told me that there were some sharp-eyed snipers around—and this we learned later to be true.

It was left for the third battalion to get the sharpest initiation. We reached the line just in time to see the sad evidence that the Germans had our range. As we filed into the trenches for our first tour of duty in the line, Company E was slowly completing the task of digging out twenty-three of its men who had been buried by a shell-hit in a dug-out.

It was somewhat due to inexperience that the Germans got our range. The second battalion had been careless about leaving mess kits and other bright objects out where the enemy fliers could see them and fix our line. This brought practice shelling, which finally resulted in some direct hits.

It was a shock to us, when we came upon the rescue workers. It aroused both anger and nerves. Pity, we thought, that these men were killed without a chance to come to grips with the enemy, without even catching sight of him. However, with the advent of our seasoned American army, this contented trench-waiting and desultory, long-distance, impersonal, scientific slaughter ceased to be the distinguishing feature of modern war. The Americans brought the German out into the open country, and they kept him there until he quit.

Some wounded men were rescued from the caved-in dugout. The 117th Engineers had charge of the work, and they carried out the excavation with record dispatch. Many of those buried, however, were dead when reached from lack of air and from the crushing weight of the fallen earth. The last of them were carried from our trenches before

sun-up, and we settled down to life in the line.

That day we began to rebuild the battered trenches and to replace the smashed dug-outs. There was intermittent shell fire, but little damage was done. We had men on guard to give early notice of enemy planes, and the rest of us kept well down below the top. We were also careful about mess kits and other objects that might well reflect light, giving a hostile birdman notice of our presence. There were no casualties the first day.

That night we sent out our detachment of snipers to gather information about the enemy. The land before us was a wasted, battered forest, hilly and rough, and sprinkled with a medley of ragged shell holes. There were trees whose branches had been clipped in fanciful pattern by shrapnel and shells and other trees that had been splin-

tered by direct hits. It was a desolate outlook from our trench over No Man's Land.

Several uneventful days passed, and we had the feel of the trenches. We were becoming anxious to increase our war experiences, and felt that an advance, or something, would be a welcome tonic. Then came St. Patrick's day, March 17. Major Timothy J. Moynahan, in command, decided to observe the day with fitting ceremonies, which gave some of us at least a chance for a little diversion.

The Major summoned Sergeant Howard Emerson, now a lieutenant, in command of the snipers, and, reminding him of the day, told him that he thought it could be most fittingly observed by bringing in a bagful of prisoners and looking them over.

"Sergeant," he said, "to-day is St. Patrick's Day, and you've just got to get some

Boche. I will be greatly disappointed if you come back empty-handed."

Luck was against Sergeant Emerson that day. He did come back empty-handed, but he came near not coming back at all. This was what happened; for he told me the story afterward.

The Sergeant promised to honor the day, if it were possible. He went out with his detail after dark, and made his way rapidly toward the enemy lines. There was no one to be found in the first line, though the men searched thoroughly up and down, giving considerable time to the search. They then pushed on. The second line, likewise, was deserted. Again much time had to be given to an exploration of this line, and, by the time that the Sergeant and the men were convinced that no enemy were here, the time had arrived for their return to the trenches.

The Sergeant sent his men back, that is, all except Private Edward Dittman.

These two pushed on into the enemy country. They proceeded very cautiously; for at any moment they might break through a thicket into an enemy position or patrol. Around twelve o'clock they reached a hill from which they could see enemy moving. They let themselves down in the brush here and watched for some time. Then they formed a wild scheme for getting some St. Patrick's Day booty out of the midst of the German camp. Of course it was impossible to make captures here, but they decided to crawl deeper in and see what would happen. Nearing the German position, they saw, somewhat in advance, what looked to be the crouching figure of a man. He was a dimly outlined patch of deeper black directly in their path. For a few minutes they lay quietly debating. Finally Emerson decided

that Dittman should remain where he was, while he himself explored the figure more closely.

Emerson crawled away into the night, wriggling and twisting through the underbrush and scarce daring to breath. He steadily approached the crouching figure, and several times fancied that it stared alertly in his direction when some twig cracked. It was a nerve-trying progress, which Emerson knew might end any moment by the speaking of a German rifle. Emerson had no reason to believe that the German could not see his bulky shadow painfully working its way forward.

At last within easy and certain range of the figure, Emerson convinced himself that it was an enemy outpost and also that this outpost was peering with straining eyes in his direction. Such a moment makes a man's heart lose a beat or two; for the outcome of

such moments is certain death for some one. Emerson worked his gun carefully forward; aimed carefully and fired.

The figure hunched upward, and then lurched forward out of sight. But the shot seemed to echo through the hills with the strength of an H. E. shell, and all was alive of a sudden before Emerson. A machine gun began to sweep the field before him, sputtering with vicious spitefulness. He turned and crawled as swiftly as fingers dug in the ground could move him back toward Dittman.

He did not find Dittman. At first he thought that he had lost his way. He dared not call out, for the enemy were making an active investigation of the shot on their front. He turned toward where he thought our lines lay, and dodging, crawling, running across open spaces, crouched low here, and working his way quickly on hands and

knees through rough patches there, he finally distanced the enemy alarm and reached our trenches safely at two o'clock in the morning.

The Major was sorely disappointed when Emerson reported that he could find no enemy in the first and second lines, but he was well pleased that his capable head of the Sniping Detail had come back safe. He knew that Emerson was a capital soldier, that he had steady and hardy nerves, and so he knew that he would have brought back any enemy he could find.

Emerson did not report his encounter with the Boche. He knew that he had no right to stay out so late, and, further, that the risk he had taken, unsupported by his men, had been a foolish one. The men came to know the story, however, and so Emerson got the rightful credit for being the first man in the Shamrock Battalion to kill an

enemy. In fact he got the first of that long string of enemies that were to fall to the credit of the 165th Infantry.

Things gradually livened up in our sector. The guns got more ambitious. Heinie would strafe us, ever and again, with H. E., shrapnel and gas. The guns took a powerful hold upon our souls, and there were moments when we wished ourselves back in the mud of Camp New York, in the dark, cold, hard French Pullmans, drilling in some dreary deserted village, in short, anywhere at all except under the ominous concussion of the guns.

As the centuries unfold and the art of war improves, it becomes a more and more painful development for the soldier to season himself for his task and trials. Season himself, he finally does, however. Somehow the guns, the gas, the crackling automatics, the liquid fire, the deviltry of modern warfare

etches its way into his spirit like a biting acid until callous comes, until apprehension and the feeling for self-preservation deadens, and the soldier becomes intent alone upon his mission of enemy destruction. An aggregate of such soldiers who have been stunned past fear are known as shock troops. The Rainbow Division, our Division, soon qualified as shock troops.

Lunéville, however, was our baptism. We were new and soft in spirit. We were hardened, and especially was my battalion hardened, in a stiff baptismal fire.

When the shelling began gradually to swell, we increased our patrol work in the effort to learn whether Fritz was planning some attack against us. Our scouts were out every night. They explored No Man's Land and the Germans' positions thoroughly without finding any evidence that the enemy had in outlook an advance here.

Our positions were reconnoitered with great success by a German flier on the morning of March 21. He was a daring air scout. Reaching the vicinity of our lines, he swooped low and flying just above our heads he found and marked out trenches. He must have photographed us with great detail as we were to learn that day.

We rained machine gun and rifle fire on him, but, as far as we could see, our fire had no more effect than it would have had had we been aiming at a meteor. He finished his mission thoroughly and then rapidly returned within his lines.

The men were disgusted with this poor hunting. It seemed that the birdman had been so close to us that we could have hit his machine by throwing stones at it, and here most every gun of the battalion had been turned loose with no effect. Some of us

mourned that we did not think in time to try a bit of Irish confetti on him.

He returned with the photographs of our lines. These were developed over there in the enemy camp, and when the plates were finished they had our range to the fraction of a nicety. This was impressed upon us shortly after.

That night at about 9 o'clock the thing started. The Germans put right down upon our trenches a heavy drum fire. There was a winged fury breaking over us, tearing the earth up in chunks and amid frightful pandemonium showering us with earth, stones and débris, splintering the forest at our back, stinging our ear drums until they ached, curdling our blood with the heaving concussion and first gasping uncertainty of it all.

High explosives, gas shells, shrapnel, and machine gun bullets made the night a

hideous inferno. The earth around us boiled and churned and heaved and groaned and shivered. The air above us hissed and roared and snapped. The steady streaming rush of the messages of the guns withered our hearts as they smote and smote our trench. It is utterly impossible to describe the sensations that one has upon the first such night!

Under the mighty beat of this drum fire my company melted and melted away. The gas flooded unaware over the trenches, chlorine, tear and mustard gases. The shrapnel pieces flew thick among us. And then the high explosives rained down and tore our trenches up in masses. It was an awe-inspiring baptism into the cult of modern war that our Shamrock Battalion had!

Yet no one of this National Guard organization thought to desert his line of trench to seek refuge deep in the woods. Frightened,

dismayed, helpless—yes! But all stayed with the drum fire until gas or shell got them or until they were relieved. Captain Hurley, so I learned later from the men, though a casualty by all the rules of war, stayed with his men and encouraged them as long as he could stagger. Company K's officers went through the first tornado of the enemy's guns let loose upon them as though they had been bred amidst the discomforts of hell and rather liked it all. They set an example of which we of the Shamrock Battalion have just right to be proud.

Before morning grayed there were only thirty men left upon their feet, and most of these needed the attention of the surgeons. Six men out of the whole company managed to weather the storm, and, I was later told, each one of these had to be treated in the first aid station.

It was my fortune to be gassed about mid-

way in this evening. The gas takes its victime unawares. The first that I noticed in my excitement was that the water was streaming from my eyes almost as though they were hydrants. I could not see my hand before my face. A gray, impenetrable mist closed thickly around me and I fell upon my knees to steady myself. Crawling I knew not in what direction, I was starting to feel my hands and knees stinging as though they had been burned. I had crawled into mustard gas.

Some one stumbled over me in the darkness; spoke to me, then, when I could not answer, reached down and pulled me to my feet and bore me back to the dressing station. Here my eyes were washed and my hands and knees were treated. I was blind.

CHAPTER VI

IN THE HOSPITAL

THE dressing station was crowded with cases. There was a confused medley of sounds, stifled complaints, low moaning, sharply drawn breaths, an occasional cry. Here was a more earnest phase of war.

The pain in my eyes and head had grown intolerable, and the burns about my knees added to my discomfort. The water flowed in such a stream down my cheeks that I began to fear that my eyes themselves were running out. The wait here was unpleasant.

As soon as was possible we were dispatched from here to Evacuation Hospital No. 1 at Lunéville. Tom Hogan, a member of my company, took care of me in my

blindness. He had also been badly gassed but not about the eyes. He had left the company somewhat later than I and told me that most of the men by now were casualties. He said that a bare handful were left in the trenches.

At the Evacuation Hospital our pedigrees were taken and our clothes and we were given pajamas and a bathrobe. Many were in very bad condition and had to remain here a considerable time before being moved. I stayed here only three days.

We were loaded into a real American Red Cross train, the most comfortable, even luxurious thing in trains, I believe, that was operating in all France. It seemed to us wounded like a breath from civilization again, a reminder of life in that country where things are done with spirit and with finish. Parenthetically, let me say, the more

the A. E. F. saw of Europe, the more it appreciated America.

Base Hospital No. 32, about the center of France, was my destination. It was situated in Contrexeville and was in charge of hospital units from Indiana and Ohio. It was a large and well arranged place. However, I did not find this out until later for I was still totally blind.

In spite of all that my comrades did to cheer me, I was in the lowest reaches of despondency, for I thought that I had lost my sight for life. I envied those who had lost a leg or an arm or both legs. For them, I felt, life still held much. While handicapped, they could still round out lives full of usefulness and happiness, whereas, I felt, there was little usefulness in store for a blind man and still less of joy in living.

Some of my pals tried to dispel my discouragement by telling me of the harder lot

of others, and there were many sad stories to tell. One of the most dramatic of these I shall never forget. It was enacted in the dressing station when I first reached there. It had escaped my notice because of my blindness, but a man who had watched the gallant death of our pal and had heard the officer reprimanded told me the story in the Base Hospital.

The wounded, the badly mangled and the gassed were coming into the station in steady streams and the doctors and orderlies had their hands full to distraction. They were working frantically to give the prompt aid to all, having but little time to spend over cases of minor importance. Into this place of straining activity, two dissimilar cases were brought.

The first was a case of slight burns by mustard gas, suffered by an officer of one of our Allies. He came in complaining vol-

ubly. The other was the case of a serious wound, of an arm torn from the shoulder and the raw flesh by the torturing mustard gas. This last case was that of Private Harry McCoun, of my company.

McCoun was brought in pale, fully conscious, and, although suffering terrible agonies, still silent, with lips manfully compressed and with true soldier's eyes unwinking, straight ahead. The surgeon looked him over and shook his head. McCoun told him of the frightful burning in his shoulder flesh, which the surgeon determined was due to gas infection. He knew that McCoun must die.

They made McCoun as comfortable as possible; did what they could for him. He asked for a drink of water, and then, according to my friend who watched, seeming to understand that he was dying, he pressed his lips together and fought the pain off silently

until the end came. He died a soldier's courageous death and, though the end came slowly and most bitterly, no whimper passed his lips while he lay waiting.

The officer's complaints, on the other hand, increased steadily in volume. His eyes burned, his hands burned, his throat and lips were burning from the gas. He complained about the attention that was being given, and continually troubled the orderlies for this and that. Finally, one Yankee lieutenant got his fill.

"Shut up," he snapped out. "Do you think you're the only one around here suffering? Don't be such an infernal baby. Look at the lad alongside of you. He's only asked for a glass of water since he's been here—and God knows what he's suffering."

The officer broke out again in loud self-pity.

"Get out of here," roared the thoroughly

exasperated Yankee lieutenant. "Get out of here and get back to the line where you belong!"

Harry McCoun's death became one of the company's proud memories. He went like a soldier, steadfastly and in exemplary way, though suffering almost unbearable pain.

At the Base Hospital we were placed in the most comfortable beds that I have ever slept in. Probably their good qualities were accentuated by comparison with the sleeping places that fall to one's lot while campaigning, but certain it is that weeks of this hospital bed almost ruined me for life at the front again.

I could hear the Red Cross nurses making their way quietly among us, bringing us food and cigarettes and cheer. There was a relaxed and kindly feeling in the air here, so that one fell into waking dreams that he was home again. The nurses made these

great institutions seem like friendly family circles, and it is to be remembered of these American women that they softened the pains and smoothed away the worries of 200,000 of wounded of the A. E. F. Their fine and tender care was blessed by many a harassed sufferer.

After weeks of treatment and nursing my sight began to return to me. It came back little by little. During this time I was taken care of by my pal Tom Hogan, who had been sent to this Base Hospital along with me. He kept in invariable good humor; he would have joked about his own death, I fancy, and he teased me about my blindness until I was ashamed to remember it. This, I believe, helped me to get back into form.

The change from life in the field to life in this hospital might be compared to a change from life in a noisome tenement to

life in a palatial hotel. The food was excellent and there was plenty of it. There was quietness, no arduous duties, no irksome restraints, and life flowed by here like a scented barge upon a gentle current. One hated to think of the front here, not so much because one dwelt in mind upon the chances of battle, but rather because we dreaded to give up these beds for the mud of the trenches, this food for hard tack and corned willie, and this easy life for drill and hikes.

My "week-end" at the hospital, however, passed the way of all good things. It had come to seem like home. It certainly was the nearest thing to home that I found in France. However, in about two months, I had so far recovered as to be fit for duty again.

Going away was like having a tooth with a bad nerve pulled. During my last nights

at the hospital, I did nothing but dream about moldy corned willie and hikes through knee-deep mud. Some of these dreams were so realistic that I would wake up and feel about me anxiously to reassure myself that I still possessed a real white man's bed.

However, when the day came, I was glad to go back and rejoin the boys. The company was after all my unit, my home in France, my one fixed place in all the grand, strange, foreign turmoil of this world war.

CHAPTER VII

BEFORE WE RIDE THE GERMAN STORM

EQUIPPED with a piece of coffee cake and a can of corned willie, I took my place in solitary splendor in a substantial Yankee truck for return to my company. The night before a big ambulance train had come down from the front bringing wounded, and I was one of the few to join the train on its journey back. I had the large feeling of a seasoned campaigner. There was, however, much far tougher seasoning before me.

It was a long drive back, a pleasant, indolent drive, with nothing to do but to add to one's familiarity with the geography of France. The train took its departure about eight o'clock in the morning and did not come to a halt until seven o'clock that night.

It rolled along merrily until the heavy traffic just behind the front was reached, and, for all the world war concerned me, I might have been some millionaire on an early tour in France.

It felt like a wanderer's return to be at home again in the company. Pals came up and congratulated me upon my escape and joshed me about my easy life at the hospital. "Hogan will have to have a valet now," one of them commented, while another dampened my enthusiasm: "Oh, man, how we drill here!"

There were many new faces in the company, many who were still looking forward to their first taste of fighting and who envied us our bitter experience with an enemy barrage as heartily as men envied others for more respected places and bigger incomes back home. Some of our new members were

newcomers, indeed, having only recently landed in France.

From the men I learned the outcome of our hot night in the trenches before Lunéville. I was told that Corporal Joseph M. Farrell, now a lieutenant, had been the only "non-com" left on his feet when the big German "shoot" was over. There were six others out of the company who outlasted the affair, and even these had to report later for minor treatments.

Captain J. P. Hurley, I was told, had been badly gassed about midnight, but insisted upon staying with the company until the worst of the job was over. He took the whole thing very philosophically, the men said, and did what he could with the same confidence that he showed on the parade grounds.

Some of our pals had "gone west," Walter Bigger, Robert Allen, Lawrence Gavin,

Harry McCoun and others. Most all of my pals had had longer or shorter experiences in the hospitals and the warm stories they told would have made our good doctors and nurses blush at the praise paid them had they been there to hear.

We were in the line at Baccarat, and the boys said that the outfit had had a very quiet time during my stay at the hospital, but that they thought I was getting back just in time for trouble. Preparations were going on which indicated, they said, lively times ahead. I, too, soon sensed the fact that I had rejoined the company in time to take part in something big but nobody seemed to know just when it would be or what.

After reporting at my company orderly room and having my name again enrolled in the company roster, I had a cheery talk with the Captain. He told me how glad he

was that I had come through all right in a way that made me know the sincere interest that he took in us of the company.

"The boys were fine," he said in brief comment on our experience, "simply fine. They showed themselves equal to everything we'll have to do."

I left the Captain, got a mess kit, and sought out good, old "Paddy" Boland, the company cook, to see how field service fare would agree with me after two months of being spoiled in the hospital. He gave me a choice sample of his famous Irish stew, which he could make out of anything at all, given the order, a fire and a stewing receptacle. "Paddy" was a good cook, a genial concocter of simple field fare, and the stew tasted good. From the cookhouse I went to try beds, army style, again, and this test was not so satisfactory.

The distant guns have a soothing effect,

once one is accustomed to their speaking. Much as the musical roar of the elevated railways in New York City aids the slumber of those long acclimated to the art of sleeping within reach of their tracks, so the speaking of the guns, out of range, lulls the accustomed into gentle sleep. The men who have gone through four years of this war will suffer, I predict, severe insomnia now that the guns drone over them no more.

The barracks seemed like home again. Some of the boys had colds and their coughing awakened me in the night, and the music of the guns caused me to drowse off after each such awakening.

It was small wonder that many caught cold. The place was very damp. The raw rain drizzled over the camp day and night. Two or three men reported at sick call daily, and I myself, coming from the sheltered life of the hospital into the midst of this

raw, infernal mistiness, took sick the first night. I awoke next day with a great longing in my heart for the hospital, with a bad cold, and thoroughly miserable.

There was drill here twice a day. The camp was known euphemistically as Camp Mud—in fact, it was much worse. It was situated about a mile from the town of Baccarat upon a bottomless, shifting slough. Drilling in this stuff made muckers of us all.

While we were here the 77th Division was brought into the line—New York's Own—and were quartered in part of the town. We met men from this Division whom we had known back home and spent hours talking about New York, its delights, its comforts, its variety, about everything which is of New York and which we did not have here.

The National Army men were eager to

learn about life at the front, about the things they were soon to meet and to overcome so heroically and with such heavy losses, and I'm afraid we gave them all the dark details that had come to our attention and all others that we could imagine without too much effort.

It was not long before the Shamrock Battalion was again headed for the Germans and trouble. Almost a week's notice was given for preparation. It was now the latter part of June, and the German strength shown in their great offensives had become known to us through a mass of conflicting rumors. We were all eager to know where we were going, and there was a body of opinion that we were going to Flanders to fight for the Channel ports.

The new members of the company were particularly keen for the experiences of action. Some of the older men felt it neces-

sary to brace their spirits with graphic and gruesome description. This thoughtfulness on the part of some of the veterans made the new men act more like veterans; they were still eager, but not so set upon hurrying the officers forward.

We were now known as the "Shamrock Battalion," a name which we tried all along in the service we saw to make a proud name in America's military history. Major James A. McKenna, Jr., was in command, than whom no more fearless, gay-hearted and lovable officer broke lances with the Germans during the more than four years of war.

Major McKenna, a college man, a clubman, an athlete, a sportsman and a deserved social favorite, was an ideal officer, and the men of the battalion would have followed him into the worst muss on earth. The battalion was satisfied with its Major from the

ground up, and I think he was satisfied with the battalion.

With the end of June approaching, we were ordered to pack for the march. The men were told that they were to move soon, but not when, where or how. The how interested us most. Some said that it was to be an all-night hike; others had a straight tip that we would move in trucks, and still others held up the terrible picture of a long trip in French Pullmans.

The battalion was lined up for the march about six o'clock one evening; the roll was called, and about seven o'clock we were on our way, making a short-cut over the fields toward the road leading out of Baccarat.

It was a dusty beginning. Loaded with heavy packs and extra ammunition, the battalion kicked up about all the loose earth in that part of France, and our throats were

soon choked and parched with the fine particles.

The march was doubly hard for me. I had led such a royal and flabby existence in the hospital that even a little informal hike would have seemed a hardship, while this march was a torturing grind.

On our way along the road we met some of the 77th coming in to take over our sector. It was a quiet sector when we left it, a drowsy, tame, stupid sector, but the Germans learned of the new arrivals on their front and made it another place.

There was a rapid-fire of questions and answers shot back and forth as our organizations passed each other. They yelled out to us:

"Who's with you from the Gas House District?" "Who's there from Thirty-eighth street?" "Forty-second street?"

"Broadway?" "Who's there from Brooklyn?"

This last was followed by cat calls and an answer in chorus: "Who, indeed!"

At that time the 165th Regiment, the Old Sixty-ninth, was a bit jealous that the 77th Division should be known as "New York's Own." We, of course, felt that if anybody belonged to New York it was the famous Old Sixty-ninth, and we felt just a bit disinherited by this affectionate naming of the 77th Division. However, after the 77th had poured out its blood lavishly on some of the hardest fought fields of France, our jealousy softened away and an admiration for our gallant brothers-in-arms took its place.

We pounded along the turnpike through the night. Now and again, we passed hospitals and the boys who had been casualties took long, wistful looks at them. The hike

was a hard one, and some dropped out on account of weakness or sore feet.

About daybreak we reached the first way station on our way to the new front. It was a wee village called Roumont, and here we learned that the first and second battalions were in camp in nearby towns.

There were a few days of rest here, broken only by numerous inspections. There were some afternoon hikes, and, among the more enterprising, some attempts at exploring our new neighborhood. Time hung heavy on our hands in this place.

Let me digress here and say that time in rest camps hung heavier on the hands of the American soldier than on the soldier of any other army in Europe. All of us, from General Pershing down, in the A. E. F., were impatient to get our task over with, to finish our job so that we might get back to God's country. It is fair to say that each

of our million and a half doughboys grudged every day's delay. They came to France with the one and only thought in their minds of beating the Germans thoroughly and getting back home again as soon as possible.

About the first week in July, the Shamrock Battalion got under way again toward its unknown objective. The way lay through shaggy woods and rough fields, and it, too, was a tiresome march. We tramped through dust clouds, over uneven, shifting soil for miles, and then had hard going through the woods and brush at night.

One morning at five o'clock, after an all-night hike, we again came within the distant sound of the guns at the small town of Bouy. This we found out later was in the quiet zone behind the Reims sector.

Our outfit passed through Bouy and two miles beyond this place we came upon one of the largest camps we had seen near the

front. There were many barracks and the fields about had been trodden to shabbiness. The battalion reached the camp at eight o'clock, pretty much spent, and found the first and second battalions quartered here, the first time that the Old Sixty-ninth regiment had been assembled in one cantonment since it had landed in France.

The men immediately turned in for a good day's sleep. I, however, had the day on my feet before me. I was acting at that time as liaison man, and that day was my turn on duty. And I was so thoroughly tired that morning that I slept with one eye at a time all day.

It's a bit of task to keep awake for an extra hour of duty after a full day's march in heavy marching order, sometimes, and that day it was particularly hard for me. However, there were twenty-four of us at battalion headquarters, and each one of us,

I guess, would have preferred sleeping to being crowned King of Europe and Asia Minor.

We runners wore a green band on our left arm with a shamrock in its center to distinguish us as runners of the Shamrock Battalion. The boys were prouder of this armband than a ham actor is of spats or the honest laborer of his celluloid collar and cuffs. We looked upon it already as a mark of distinction in Europe's turbulent military life.

The regiment rested here several days, and my fondest memories of this place are that we ate well. The resting was mostly technical, a theory of the Higher Command, I suppose; for the regiment was called for drills, parades and maneuvers daily and worked diligently to condition itself for the coming fight. It was some of the briskest resting that our outfit did in France.

At last orders came to proceed on our way toward the unknown point of concentration. We started out about nine o'clock in the evening and took another cross country course, than which nothing is more undesirable when carrying a heavy pack.

We marched at night, at this time, undoubtedly, to escape enemy observation; for our unit was a part of an important Allied operation. But there was an added advantage in the night marches, and that was that we escaped the beat of the hot July sun.

The hike lasted all night and toward the end of it we reached the country where the ground is chalky. Over this material, I should imagine, it would be bad enough to wander alone, but with two thousand heavy-shod feet churning up the dust the air becomes thick and intolerable.

About daylight the battalion was halted upon a field, on which no one in sane mind

would ever think of choosing as a site for a pleasure camp. The air was so thick with dust that, moistened with our breaths, it became like a fluid dough, and the field was barren and soaked up the July heat gluttonously.

There were a few barracks about, but these were occupied by French soldiers. It was the most comfortless landscape that tired men ever looked out upon. Nothwithstanding the inhospitable nature of the spot, however, we pitched tents here and were soon deep in sleep. Almost any place is fit for sleeping purposes, if one is worn out enough.

In the evening there was "breakfast" mess, flavored with chalk dust, and we learned that we were to take the road again that night. This was one of few times that news of a hike was received by the men with a spirit of grateful welcome. Anywhere at

all, so long as it lies away from this smothering dustiness!

The guns sounded more plainly here, and they were speaking more frequently than they had spoken, with the exception of one red-hot evening, in our quiet sector at Lunéville. It was plain that there were warm times ahead, just ahead around the bend in the road.

At nine o'clock we left camp. There were many other units of the Rainbow Division on the road. We of the Rainbow were out this time to make for ourselves a historic place in America's wonderful story.

Each step along the way this night was a step nearer the guns. It was getting altogether home-like, but, despite this, we had somewhat of the gentle hesitancy of the prodigal's spirit, about rushing home. There are spiritual if not physical, drawbacks, about each returning march into the roar of

the guns. It is a something that is hard to explain—not cold feet, no!—but a something that hangs heavy upon one.

Our road was an unusually rough one. After stumbling along it for hours, we reached a wood about four o'clock in the morning, whence we could see the rapid-stabbing glares of the guns.

"Oh, well, we're in for it," cheerfully groaned the humorist of my platoon.

It was evident to all of us that the real thing in war was before us. By this time the Rainbow Division was classified as a shock-troops' organization, which the Germans later found to be no mistaken classification. The fact that we knew we were classed as shock troops, however, did not add any considerable buoyancy to our spirits nor quietude to our peace of mind.

At the wood the men of each company were led to their places in the third-line

trenches here. Everything was made as comfortable as possible, and the battalion soon lay upon its ear, determined, anyway, to get another day's untroubled slumber. The shells were not ranging back this far. It was relatively quiet. We knew that we were in the convulsing Champagne line now, and we drowsed off with the feeling "To-morrow's troubles be damned!"

CHAPTER VIII

THE "RAINBOW" DAMS THE FLOOD

THE "Rainbow" was being sent into the line to dam the German flood. It did this. It absorbed the best efforts of the best German shock troops, and shocked them, I'm afraid, much more than they shocked it. The "Rainbow" didn't give, bend or budge.

There were many units of the Division already in line by the time that we came up. For the first day or so, while the enemy was gathering his forces, we had a quiet time. The Shamrock Battalion slept all the first day and all the next night.

Two more irksome days dragged by. We received a mail here, and some of the men received Christmas packages that had been on their way for months. I received let-

ters and answered them. It is dreary business to write a letter for a censor's entertainment, but it is a still more dreary business to wait around for a big battle to begin.

Tobacco reached us here, some of the tobacco supplies sent to us by The Sun Fund, and this trebly welcomed gift made the work we had to do easier for us, lightened our hearts and steadied our nerves, and helped many an unlucky soldier over the rough spots of his pain as he lay mangled, waiting for treatment. There were many back home who did things for us of the army and the army holds these things in thankful remembrance, but for no individual aid from "back home" has the A. E. F. a more thankful memory than for The Sun Fund, whose tobacco supplies helped the men to stand up under their trials.

Warning came down to us to be ready

to go into action at a moment's notice. There was a frequent but desultory fire along the front, a sort of mutual feeling out of one another. Then on July 14, about six or seven o'clock at night, all firing seemed to die away; things were abnormally, unpleasantly quiet; it was the calm before the storm wind.

The stillness was uncanny. It made our nerves jumpy. It seemed almost as though the war had stopped. It isn't natural; it isn't comfortable to sleep in the trenches when the guns have ceased to speak.

"I wonder if they've found out that the Irish are here and quit," one querulous voice complained.

Towards midnight our own guns started an insistent tune—irritated, made suspicious, probably, by the enemy's silence. Their roar increased to an awful strength, which seemed to jar and rock our trenches

and the wood that sheltered them. Then came the reply from the guns of the Germans, and through the chaotic din they seemed to scream to us: "We are ready."

The German answer grew and grew and grew into a mighty symphony, which pounded upon us until each nerve was raw and stinging, into such a terrible symphony as seemed to tear the very being from its body —and this symphony through the morning grew and grew.

The ground heaved under the vast detonation. The imagination could almost detect the searing winds belched from the hate-flaming mouths of the myriad guns. Shock on shock, the shells exploded until the din touched men on the raw and made them ache all through, until for very noise one could go mad.

The enemy were reaching all areas. The fire kept up undiminished all that day and

night. Hell, bedlam and chaos combined can only convey a weak idea of that twenty-four-hour tempest. There was no sleep that day nor that night, and when the big fight finally came it came as a blessed relief and every man in the "Rainbow" did his best to show the enemy his appreciation of their frightful music.

At five o'clock, on the morning of July 15, the third battalion was moved up to reinforce the first and second battalions. The excitement of being on the move into the thick of it for the time made us forget the shelling.

Despite the heavy drum fire of the enemy, casualties had been light. The trenches in all areas had been thoroughly battered and the ground in between was liberally pock-marked with new shell-holes. The men, however, had remained scattered in thin

lines and the effect of the fire had been minimum.

We were stationed in our new positions, waiting to repel the enemy when he should send his storm waves against us, by seven o'clock, and we snatched occasional curious glances at the hill before us behind which his shock troops lay.

The German shells were pounding our new line into powder, and up until nine o'clock the force of his bombardment seemed to mount and mount. The men patiently waited, each sunk in his own thoughts, occupied with his own emotions and sensations, the spirit of each bending before the tremendous gale of explosives.

During these hours of waiting, hours that tax one more severely even than "going over the top," our Major and Father Duffy came along the lines, pausing to speak a few words with each man in the line.

One look into Father Duffy's face was good for jaded nerves; for his face radiated a cheerful calm which made the hell around us seem unreal. He might just as well have been walking down the silent aisle of some majestic cathedral for all his face told of heeding danger or of wrought-up nerves. He spoke little personal things to each of the men; it was as though his thoughts were not on the battle, as though no battle were going on.

The Major asked each man as he paused what the orders were, and each answered: "Hold to the last man." The Major, then, asked: "Are you going to do it?" And each answered, "Yes."

About nine o'clock, or a little later, the heavy drum-fire snapped short. Over the lip of the trenches we saw the gray-clad figures shuffling down the hill, coming as thick as bees at swarming time.

There was a sigh of thankfulness all along the line that the shelling had decreased, and all prepared with a will for repulsing the assault. Bayonets were tested and then rifles laid on the enemy, while the men leaned against the trenches staring at Fritz—thousands of him—with keen interest.

The moving clusters of tiny figures gathered and gathered over the brow of the hill, the frontmost wavelets scurrying jerkily toward our lines. We waited and watched until the leading flecks of the stormers came near enough for us plainly to distinguish one individual from another; then we swung ourselves out of the trenches and lay down in skirmish line.

Rifle fire cracked down our line, and then stabbed at that line of gray with increasing rapidity as it scampered toward us. Machine guns and rifles clicked out their messages as fast as the men could work them,

but, though many of the bullets found Germans and halted them in giddy contortions in the midst of their career over the field, the others kept grimly on, and over the brow of the hill fresh swarms kept continually gathering.

There were mad minutes of this race between our little leaden missives and the remnants of the storming Prussian Guard, when, closing in compact bodies, they broke furiously upon our line and the line of the Sixty-ninth became a dizzy whirl of hand-to-hand combats. A fraction of the first German waves had reached us, but behind them were spurting other gray lines to reenforce them.

Clubbed rifles were splintered against skulls and shoulder bone; bayonets were plunged home, withdrawn and plunged home again; automatics spit here and there in the line; grenades exploded; while a man

occasionally shot his dripping bayonet free from his enemy's body. Our front line became a gruesome mess.

Before the gray wave was conquered, reenforcements reached it and freshened the blinding fight. The New York boys and the Germans were thoroughly mixed up by now in a seething, churning, convulsing line. Sometimes there were snatches of such quietness here and there, in this death agony of the German's offensive strength, that one could hear the laboring breath whip, as men struggled for an opening to plunge their knives home through an enemy's neck or bowels. The picture of the wildly struggling men in this line is burned and seared upon my memory!

There were twenty-five German divisions, comprising the crack storm troops of the Empire, sent against our ten divisions in the line. They were troops picked for their

spirit, their fighting ability and the high traditions of their organizations, and they fought us here with a stubborn bitterness, with a reckless resolution, with a self-forgetting hatred that was to make an impression upon the flabby Yankee for all time. They came to grips with a fierce eagerness, determined to teach the Yankee an unforgetable lesson in the rough art of war, and they stayed with us fighting like mad devils until we broke them, broke their morale here.

It was reported that the Kaiser himself was watching the course of this action, and was said later that he had been stationed some fifteen miles behind the line to watch his seasoned veterans smash through the Yankee line. As it was, I think, the spectacle of that carnage must have disheartened him.

His men fought well, heroically, regardless of life and death. But, if they had their

orders to break us, we of the "Rainbow," likewise, had orders to stay where we were put "till the last man." And we, of course, were fighting for America, while the German troops were fighting only for a Kaiser, which, probably, made the difference.

The Germans tried in shock upon shock to carry through the will of the master, but the "Rainbow" broke them time and again with bayonet and clubbed rifle and fists right on the lip of their trenches. And the later waves, though they came on determinedly, were worn men and their "punch" was gone.

There were some mean tricks played after we had choked the first waves of their great storm. Some of these I saw, and others I learned of by hearsay. Early in the battle, I noticed four men, with Red Cross bands upon their arms and carrying a stretcher, approaching our lines. Other things took my attention for a moment, and when I

turned to look again I saw them, much nearer, lay their burden down and in a trice they were pouring into our ranks the bullets from a machine gun which they had carried. Their errand, of course, was a suicide errand.

Another German band tried to approach our lines for enfilade fire dressed in French uniforms. This group also failed to turn its trick.

They fought, as I have said, stubbornly and well to gain the Marne. It was said later that the Germans had made all preparations to be in Chalons on July 15, but whatever might have been their plans, these were greatly messed up by the time the battle was over.

Not only were the enemy organizations delayed in the development of their schedule, but they were solidly stopped short in their head-on rush, and then they were driven back. When their heaviest shock

waves had been mangled, broken and thrown back, the "Rainbow" boys went forward to meet the later ones, and finally backed the enemy three miles in the wrong direction.

Following on the heels of the shattered storm waves, the Yankees gathered in many prisoners, many of these physically worn to a drowse by the stress of their exertions. As our line wedged its way forward, the French cheered us enthusiastically, their shouts of *"Vive les Américaines"* coming staccato in the midst of the wild inferno.

There was one thing that each man in the battalion learned to appreciate before that day's work was ended, and that was the weary hours of work that our exacting officers had kept us at bayonet drill. We had growled a lot about this bayonet work, putting the interminable hours of hard drill down to misguided fadism on the part of the

officers; for, we argued among ourselves, in modern war one never has occasion to use a bayonet; why, one seldom sees the enemy, it's just a question of being shot at and shooting with big guns, with much use of rapid-firers and machine guns and, now and then, long-distance rifle practice. However, it was the long hours of bayonet work that saved our lives, more than our accomplishments as marksmen that day. Our men were quicker, more certain and more enduring than the enemy in this kind of work; and it was this that turned the balance.

The Germans relied mostly on grenades and automatics, but, despite the modern prestige of these weapons, it was the good old-fashioned knife that won the day in the battle of the Champagne. And the many hundreds of dead Germans before our trenches and deep in the field bore bayonet marks and not bullet holes.

Exhausted is a mild and temporizing word with which to express the condition of the men of our Regiment that night. When things began to quiet down toward dusk, the men could have dropped supperless where they were and slept for hours. The Germans had lacked the "go-through punch," but they certainly had tired us out.

The second battalion suffered the most heavily, I think, in this fighting. It had borne the brunt of one furious assault after another, until its men just fought back wildly in a daze. We of the third battalion and of the first did not suffer so heavily, though we, too, had had a hard day's work and plenty of excitement.

During the night the battle went on in dozens of little wars in the dark in No Man's Land. We had patrols out and so did the Germans, and these met and fought one another throughout the night. However, when

morning came the Germans were ready to concede to us that all the country round-about on which we stood was ours.

On the morning of the sixteenth, through our first great battle and our minds a night-mare jumble of its whirlwind incidents, we received the good news that we were to be relieved by two o'clock that A. M., that we were scheduled for a rest camp in the rear.

The men found time to talk this news over. There were many doubters. Some thought that we were to be moved immediately into some stiffer work, though there were a few who held to the rest-camp rumor.

We were relieved by a Polish organization, many of whose men had been in America, and these tried their abbreviated knowledge of English, or, rather, of American slang, upon our poor tired minds as they moved in and we moved out.

The Shamrock Battalion marched out and assembled in a woods in the rear, and then was led back to the third-line trench position—now well out of harm's way—which we had held the night before the big fight started. Here the first real meal since the opening of the Germans' savage "shoot" was served to us, bacon, bread, prunes and coffee.

Mess over the men thought about a coming long sleep and their mouths watered at the thought, but sleep was not on our bill-of-fare that day. We were shortly started off on a long hike, object and destination unknown, and we kept dragging ourselves along until noontide, when we put up outside of a small town called Vatenay. We heard the guns here plainly during the day and night, while air-raiders laying eggs during the night added to the accustomed lullaby music.

We stayed at this place several days and cleaned up. The men enjoyed the luxury of several good swims here, for a branch of the Marne wound by the place. These swims somewhat discouraged our many "cooties," though they did not drive them to abandon us.

Two bits of information made the rounds of this rest camp: One, that our outfit had aided in a battle which had materially lowered the morale of the enemy; the other, that we were to be moved to the other side of the salient to help the French. However, the rumor that we were booked for a month's rest persisted in the mouths of cheerful souls, and they lost nothing of their popularity by their insistence.

The few days of conditioning were soon up. We were awakened one morning at four o'clock; ate, packed, and started. A few miles down the road, we were loaded in

French Pullmans (forty hommies, etc.) and ground over the French rails all that night.

We left the train next morning at nine o'clock and started hiking again, and the first sign any one in the battalion saw said, under the arrow pointing ahead of us, "Château Thierry."

CHAPTER IX

THROUGH HELL AT CHÂTEAU THIERRY

CHÂTEAU THIERRY had had an American ring in the ears of the A. E. F. ever since the story of the Marines stand here had gone all up and down the lines. It also signified plentiful and tough fighting, and the very name filled us with a certainty that, as the Champagne was the frying pan, so this would be the fire.

Our hike this way was over one of the best roads that we had tramped in France. It was a hot, sultry July 20th, the sun beating sharply down on the paved road, and thence into our steaming faces. My pack felt as heavy as Cheops and its weight trebled with every step. It was hard going.

However, the sign "Château Thierry" put

new life in the men. They cheered it and then cheered the Marines. "We're after 'em now! We're after 'em now!" ran down the line; for, after all, the thing that each was most anxious about was to get this expeditionary job finished at the double-quick and get back to God's civilization in the United States. We all of us had seen enough of foreign parts to last us for a lifetime and over.

It was a pleasant country through which we marched, and seemed little touched by war. There were occasional farms that looked almost as inviting as unpretentious American farms, though, of course, we knew that this was an optical illusion caused by distance from the queer architecture of their buildings and out-buildings and the funny little precisions of their garden plots.

About two o'clock in the afternoon the battalion halted by the roadside for a bacon

sandwich and a cup of coffee, and an hour later large army trucks pulled up beside us, with Japanese chauffeurs and French officers in command, and we learned that we were going forward in state.

After boarding these, we began a wonderfully pleasant trip through the cooling late afternoon. The road wound through an agreeable farming country, sprinkled with quaint homes.

The trucks moved swiftly on their way, and the men forgot their fatigue and the grizzly war up front. It was a refreshing ride.

There is an official C. C. H. in every military organization (a "Company Crêpe Hanger"), and ours took the occasion of this ride to shout out: "This is the last joy ride any of us'll ever get. The next ride'll be in a Red Cross ambulance."

We sped along mile after mile, when fin-

ally we again entered the familiar home zone of the "Fighting Irish," that of devastated, gun-thundering France. We passed through a town outside of Château Thierry in which there was nothing but stone, dust heaps and dead Germans, with scattered equipment, bits of broken trucks, dead horses, and general misery and desolation.

There were many places along this part of the trip which showed that the enemy's big guns had been set up and kept speaking here. Looking these places over, one wondered how the guns had ever been dislodged. They had all the signs of permanent investment and looked capable of indefinite defense.

Many spots along the way were heavy with the nightmare smell of the battlefield. Along some particularly bad stretches, the boys slipped on their gas masks. The peculiarly penetrating and arresting odor of

the battlefield's over-ripened fruits, men and animals, is one of the hardest features of war to become accustomed to.

All around was a chaotically pitted country, wounded to the death with great rents and shell holes, deep gouged sores as far as the eye could reach. It was a pathetic country. Its trees were splintered and mangled with shell hits; its fields were plowed and scarred deep below the fertile soils and the road upon which we were traveling was torn up and battered. Our pace became a slow and cautious one.

Passing a corner where the Knights of Columbus had maintained an advanced dugout for the Yankee fighters of the 26th Division, one of their number signaled our drivers to slow down and, as we dragged past, they handed out to us their last reserves of chocolate and cigarettes. Both of these things are mighty welcome on the eve

of a "go" at the front. Their stock gave out just before the last trucks came abreast, and they showed plainly that they were just as disappointed as the men who were not to get some of this forward cheer.

However, these freely given and highly prized articles of cheer, according to the law of army life, were just as freely shared that night, so that no one came out empty-handed.

The "Shamrock Battalion" was the leading battalion this time. One and two were following us. This was a source of comfort to us because in our other encounters with the enemy, one and two had always gotten into action first. This time, we reasoned, that luck is to be ours.

The battalion was unloaded by the side of a woods about ten o'clock that night. There were no towns, villages or habitations in sight. We were in regular lone wolf

country, and this, together with the old familiar droning of the guns, was an augury to us that heavy fighting lay just a break or two in the tangle ahead of us.

The guns were heavily at work. They growled and barked and spit with the lust of a bigger battle in their throats. They were raging in deep earnestness somewhere up among the trees, with an earnestness that seemed to tell of a mighty trial for a decision. At least, this was the thought that came over a number of us, and one of the boys sang out:

"Boys, here's where Pershing's goin' to the mat with 'em. It's the Dutchman for home at last!"

We had the feeling that the offensive was ours. We had a feeling that the other scrap and the Marines' scrap was a sort of preliminary taking of measurements and that old John Pershing had found these measure-

ments satisfactory and to his appetite and that he was now drawing up the plans of his headquarters' organization in Berlin.

Men get a sense of such intentions even though they do not grasp the theory which is guiding the Commander-in-Chief, and we certainly sensed such on the opening of our Château Thierry fight. The men talked their "hunches" over and the consensus was that from now on our losses would be heavier than ever and, further, that Jack Pershing henceforward would not let up one minute until it was time for him to sign our clearance papers for home with the German in such a peaceful spirit that there would be no further need of us.

We guessed that the hardest kind of work was in prospect, but it put the men in the highest kind of spirits to feel that their Commander wasn't going to let the whole mess drag on much longer, but was going to wade

right in and finish the thing up with both fists and both feet so that he could hurry home again to a country that's worth living in and worth getting back to.

The men pushed forward a short distance at a wood ahead, and here camp was pitched. A rumor got around the camp—we were a bit excited over our conclusions—that it would be useless to sleep as we might be ordered forward any moment. The officers, however, set this at rest with the command to get all the sleep possible as we would soon be in a country where sleep was out of the question.

Next morning three days' rations were given out. The day passed off quietly, with the guns thundering away at the front at a tune to split their throats.

That evening, after the boys had gone to their tents, word came to get under way. I was still in battalion headquarters, acting

as battalion liaison man, and there was considerable excitement there. We were disappointed, however, for orders came to remain where we were; but all that night we runners, while the companies slept, carried orders back and forth, expecting all the time to take the message calling the companies forward.

Next morning a detail was picked to go over the lines ahead, and I was one of the lucky men to be chosen. We were all mighty anxious to get a look at the country we were to fight over. According to the etiquette and practices of the Great War, my best friends wished me "all that was coming to me," one of them adding thoughtfully, "We'll all meet West, some place."

The detail went through the woods to inspect the new positions. There were about twenty men from the battalion on this detail, under the command of Lieutenant

Knowles and Sergeant McCue. We cut straight through our woods and then walked a zigzag way through a field and a woods ahead. Shells were falling viciously all around us. We finally reached the line selected and made a careful inspection, came in contact here with a party under Captain Finn, commanding officer of Company B, the 150th Machine Gun Battalion. The men of his organization came from the State of Wisconsin.

Hardly had we completed the inspection, when the enemy laid down upon us a heavy barrage, and we had to take cover. The details dispersed to shell holes and tree stumps, and had to keep low until late mid-afternoon. Then the barrage lifted slightly, and we took the backward way. Back with the battalion, we learned that no orders had come yet.

The men began to feel depressed. They

felt that they were not needed at the front, and, though by all the rules of sanity, this should have raised their spirits, it did nothing of the sort. They felt that they and the Shamrock Battalion were somehow being slighted, and so they growled.

No orders came during the night. The battle, however, began to approach us. The Germans had been lengthening and strengthening their barrage, in a hope, mayhap, to stave off the Yanks in front. The next morning we got up with the guns beating heavily and near.

Late in the day, word came to go forward. This was July 27, and about two o'clock we began moving up. The roads we took were almost untravelable. The artillery was very thickly sown along the way, and, as we passed, these guns were pouring out a steady stream of "hymn of hate," a composition all their own, and an effective one.

The continuous and unexpected detonations and concussions close at hand started a number of pestering headaches and made us all stone deaf. The American guns were returning a mighty "strafing."

We hiked until six that evening, passing dead Germans, dead horses and ruined villages and farms all along the line. At last the march came to an end at the crest of a big hill upon which stood a lonely house. There was a German sign on this house, one of the few German signs which the boys saw in France which looked good to them. It read: *Münchener Bier hier.*

From the hill we could plainly see the fields over which a recent battle had swayed, and we had a creepy sensation that the Germans would open fire on us as soon as we passed the house.

On the hill the battalion formed in battle formation of platoon columns, and quick-

ened its pace for a sheltering woods ahead. The guns quieted down somewhat, roaring at longer intervals, and the whole countryside seemed all at once to take on quite a peaceful air.

After some walk from the hill, we reached what our officers were pleased to call "first-line trenches," but what was really a virgin wilderness; and here we dug individual holes in the thick tangle of the woods. Then each man crawled into his hole and rested.

We were called promptly at daylight by a heavy German barrage which descended upon us in a mass and wounded many of our men. This, however, was only a prelude to a whirlwind day. During the next twenty-four hours the Shamrock Battalion fought itself and the enemy off their feet.

About nine o'clock the first terrifying sound waves of the barrage soon to lash over us smashed through the lesser morning

concert, and seconds later our line was a-churn with bursting shells of all calibers. Branches crashed to the ground around and behind us; trees were splintered at our backs, and parts of the earth and rocks of our immediate countryside went up into the air in town lots and came down again in chunks and dust.

From a peaceful, quiet wilderness our line was transformed into a howling inferno.

The Shamrock Battalion moved out of its untenable position—but it moved forward. We advanced in a thin and jerky line. It was a movement of each for himself, guided by the officers' general order to advance. Meanwhile, the German barrage was blowing our lines of the night before inside out. This July 28th began and ended in a way memorable for each one of us.

The German guns were greedily demolishing the little woods we had left behind,

when our own guns took up the gigantic argument. Each particle of the air over our heads was alive with a typhoon of shells ripping along from both directions, and the strength of the fire grew until hell seemed to be moving in layers right over our heads.

After an hour or so of this demoniac dispute between the rival guns, the Americans got the upper hand and the German fury slackened and slackened, and almost died away. They still roared spasmodic defiance, but this was no longer directed deep into our fields but at the advancing lines. By this time, by the time passion had cooled away from the enemy guns, about eleven o'clock in the morning, the Shamrock Battalion was at it thick and heavy, up to its eyebrows, so to speak, in the work of its big day.

The line of the Shamrock Battalion quickened its pace, covering the rough ground at a

brisk double-quick in the direction of the enemy. Our barrage was getting short, by that I mean we were treading uncomfortably close upon its heels. In spasmodic flurries the Heinies sprinkled our advancing line with shells. The enemy seemed to sense our changing situation nicely, for he dropped his shrapnel and H. E.'s upon us with precision.

Our zone of operations had now become a deadly one in earnest. It was different from the Champagne battle. Here the tables were reversed, we were storming through the open while the Germans were resisting us from cover and upon ground which they had well prepared.

There was an almost continuous sheet of machine-gun bullets scything its way toward us now. The enemy had a machine gun behind every tree, and he was working these frantically. One felt a queer uneasy sensa-

tion in the pit of the stomach as one ran to think of the myriads of steel needles streaming through the air around him, and one felt from minute to minute that the end could only be a matter of the next step or so. The air was alive with death and the mocking rat-a-tat and crackle of death.

Our artillery by this time was of no further service to us, for we had reached beyond its range. Such shots as were still sent over did more harm than good, for they endangered us fully as much as our tree-clinging enemy. There was nothing but our rapid-firers, our rifles and our bayonets to stand by us now.

The ground was rough and forested. Here and there lay the dead of the enemy. Out from among the trees before us whipped the red-hot product of hundreds of concealed enemy machine guns, of the rifles and automatics of other hundreds of effectively

concealed Germans, all on their toes and fighting hard to teach the Yankees such a lesson as would rob them of all their ambition for further rough and untrenchman-like endeavor.

Men plunged to earth to the right and left of men. Almost at every stride some comrade fell, stumbling forward lifeless, or falling to wind and rock for a while through the first disordering sting of a fatal wound. Others just slipped down and lay low and still, too badly wounded and spent to go on with the advance, but most of them to be saved by the rapid-working mercy service of the American army. I saw these incidents, little nightmare incidents, flashed upon the screen of my vision in jumbled, jerky fashion, and I ran on feeling that the whole thing was just a dream, stopping to aim and fire as some chance gray uniform showed, and then blindly running on.

I was winded, so were we all, but on such a field and at such a time one never seems to notice things like that. The mind is detached from the work of the field and the actions of the body are automatic, going on and on. It is a good thing, when the fight goes warm, that one can't think too much.

The pace slowed a bit. It went steadily forward, but every step of the land before was being thoroughly studied ere the line advanced over it and left it behind under the protection of the Stars and Stripes. For it would have been inviting disaster to have left stray Germans with their machine guns behind us while continuing our argument with the German army on our front.

Advancing this way, with the enemy still keeping at a distance and out of sight and with all the chances for destructive work still in his favor, we came to a "little stream." We later learned that this was

the River Ourcq, and it is probable that my readers will remember the dispatches which told how the Shamrock Battalion crossed the Ourcq in the lead of the great offensive, the first of the Allied storming troops to break this German line, and also they will probably remember how Lieutenant Patrick Dowling, of my company, the first man over, lost his life here.

There was a short pause at the bank of the river. The men were very eager to get across, for they somehow got the idea that the opposite bank was as far as we would go that day. They wanted to get it all over with in a hurry.

The enemy manned every tree and thicket on the opposite bank, and they poured from here a rain of bullets at us. German stragglers, in trees, from firing pits and behind stumps, were still firing away at us from the hither bank, and with these the advance

men in the battalion were soon at grips. There was a brisk fight at the bank; the Germans were mopped up with bayonets and picked like ripe fruit out of the trees by rifle and revolver fire; our own ranks were thinned somewhat, and then the bank was won for the crossing.

It was a bad stretch, that open stretch across the Ourcq. Company K, my company, the nearest on the line toward the river, first cleared its stretch of the hither bank preparatory to the plunge across.

As the officers advanced to the lip of the river bank—and, let me say here, the officers and the non-commissioned officers showed magnificent spirit in this spurt into the enemy's lines—the German opened with a frenzy of fire. The first sweep of this fire again withered our ranks, our men falling all along the river bank. It was suicide to stay and certain death to go forward. It

was what might be called a "ticklish" situation.

There was fighting spirit and to spare in the men for any number of enterprises like this, however; for the enemy was in sight for the first time since the morning's hate and their blood was up to get at him. They had seen their comrades falling all the way hither, and their fingers itched to be at the throats of the men who had managed this killing from cover. They had, in slang phrase, by the time we reached the bank "pep" enough for anything.

Captain Hurley stepped recklessly out before the men, inviting by his position the Germans to "shoot and be damned," and holding up his hand roared at us above the din of the hard-working enemy machine guns:

"Come on, boys, we're going to it. We're going to pull off a thing here that the Ger-

mans ain't tried yet. We're goin' to give 'em a bellyful of Uncle Sam's cold steel."

This speech wasn't long on grammar but it sure woke up a world of action in the men most unfavorable to the Germans. The Captain's unconcerned example and vigorous slang made it certain that the boys were going across the Ourcq, and the Germans were going to continue on northward.

Lieutenant Patrick Dowling jumped into the river, with a broad grin on his face and his automatic in his hand, a good many yards in advance of everybody but his platoon's sergeant, Frank Doughney, and started over in the teeth of a gale of bullets. Frank Doughney was killed in mid-stream. He died a death of signal bravery and worthy of an American soldier.

Corporal James McGovern, the senior non-commissioned officer of the platoon, was in the stream, fighting hard for second place

when the enemy bullet struck Doughney, and he and Lieutenant Dowling were the first to pull themselves out on the opposite bank. The surface of the river was soon alive with our men and the splatter of enemy steel.

After crossing the river and giving directions to the men about cleaning up enough dry land to make a footing for their following comrades, Lieutenant Dowling looked about for his superior officer, Captain Hurley, in command of Company K. He learned that the Captain had been wounded, and then turned his attention toward reducing an almost unbearable enemy pressure.

Lieutenant Dowling took command of the company and led the way up a thickly forested hill, out of whose concealing fastnesses a murderous fire was pouring. Well in advance of the men and shouting words of encouragement, as ready and self-possessed as

in training camp at home, with his automatic still working, he was shot through the heart and died immediately. Lieutenant Dowling had the affection and the admiration of the men, and he was long earnestly mourned by the company.

Lieutenant H. W. Arnold took command of what was left of us and we pushed on up the hill, tearing a way through thickets, suppressing machine gun nests, picking overripe Germans out of the trees, cleaning up patches of advanced covered fighters, here and there, with bayonets, and returning as much of the enemy fire generally as we could. And the trail of the Shamrock Battalion up that hill was marked out clearly by its losses.

Lieutenant Arnold learned from a runner that Captain Hurley was grimly trying to stay on his feet and in the fight, and that he was struggling up after us as fast as failing

strength would permit. He, therefore, sent message after message back to the Captain, telling him how serious were the losses of the company and how the opposition was stiffening in front of our weakened lines. It did not look as though much of Company K would last to defend the crest of the hill after it was won, while the enemy's lines were continually strengthening in front of us. However, no answers came back to messages.

We learned later that none of our messengers got through. Lieutenant Arnold, fearing that this was the case, that the severe enemy fire had cut our line of communication to the rear, and realizing the urgency as being great, turned over the command to Sergeant Herbert F. McKenna, since a lieutenant, a commission richly earned in the red glare of battle, and undertook to report himself the heavy casualties of the company

to the Captain and the growing German forces opposed to us.

He reached the shell hole where the Captain had fallen, exhausted from loss of blood, and where he was resting to gather strength to come on to us. Lieutenant Arnold strode toward the Captain and had just reached him, when a machine gun bullet struck him in the heart and he died instantly.

There were a few stretcher bearers here under cover. It was a particularly open and dangerous zone, across which the enemy fire was whipping in belts of steel. However, the stretcher men promptly volunteered to take the chance of crossing the belt alive to save a brave and loved officer, but the Captain groaned: "Arnold is gone. Arnold is gone."

Meanwhile, such of us as were left were still advancing—for want of anything else to do or of any orders to the contrary. We

were still having a merry rip with Boche, and, somewhere behind us, the Captain was painfully working his way forward again, despite his wound and the severe loss of blood. Shortly, however, Captain Hurley was struck by a bullet in the leg and physically, though not spiritually, halted "for keeps" as far as that battle was concerned.

Lieutenant Arnold's loss in this fight was a peculiarly sad one. He was a fine, clean young officer, highly valued by his fellow officers and devotedly followed by his men. Had he survived this battle, he would have immediately set out for home, for he had been designated to train the men in the camps in America. He was very short and had early been joked in the company on this account, but his height was forgotten by all after our first brush with the enemy.

The Shamrock Battalion was advancing steadily. At times the enemy were in over-

powering weight on our front. They held us even. Then the men would throw everything they had into the scrimmage, and the advance would go on again.

We could see plainly that the enemy was getting the best of us—that is, gaining in strength and in fresh men. Most of us were winded, and a great part of the battalion was scattered all over the trail behind, struck down and out of action. However, the enemy made no gains in ground, though he continued to reduce us in numbers.

There were times when the battalion was forced to clear its path with steel, and then individual fights developed all along the swaying line. Then the resistance would break and the line would sag, here and there, forward, and the work of picking gunners out of the trees and cleaning up machine gun

covers and thickets would go on normally again.

Sergeant Claude De Costa, on one stretch of the hill, in advance of that part of the line, passed, with his men, up a very steep slope to the side of a thick cover. Noticing something move, he sprang very suddenly headlong from the ridge, into a thicket below and clean through the thicket upon a German machine gun nest, in which were six Heinies snuggled, working their guns at top speed. He pulled out his revolver and killed four of them before either they or he had recovered from their mutual astonishment. The others bellowed their appreciation of the situation with their hands up, and he sent them back under a guard from his platoon.

Lieutenant J. J. Williams was in full charge of what was left of the company now.

He kept us fighting on forward, because the position left nothing else to do.

Some of the men roused a German captain along the line. He was an unmannerly old Spartan, and insisted upon being annoying and rough even after surrendering. At last, however, he was subdued by a short-tempered Irishman. This officer thought that his rank gave him the unusual privilege of twitting his victorious enemy about his shortcomings during the heat of continuing battle. He set out to encourage us with sneering remarks. He outdid himself to express in rotten English his supreme contempt for America and everything American for the benefit of his captors. Finally, he turned to his guard and said:

"You Americans think you're going to win this war, don't you?"

"Yes," answered his Irish guard, "and you think you're going to the hospital, don't

you?" And he gave him a punch in the jaw that almost knocked him West.

The drive was still pushing fiercely onward. The Shamrock Battalion had reached its objective with the first bank of the River Ourcq. It was then at the point of the wedge of the great Champagne drive into the deep German salient. It had overshot its objective, lost heavily of its effectives, and, maddened by its losses, was stabbing its way up the hill into the desperate German defenders.

The Shamrock Battalion had lost its commanding officer, Major McKenna, at the very start of the battle. He was killed when the Germans laid every gun that they had hard upon the battalion as a deadly morning orison. During this fearful blast of enemy shelling, a large caliber, high explosive shell burst near him and the concussion killed

him immediately. None of the fragments touched him.

The Major was standing beside Father Duffy's assistant, Father Hanley, and was gazing intently toward the German lines. I saw him smile confidently while the enemy fire was shaking the country all around about him and us as he said something to his companion. I did not learn until after the battle that he had been killed.

Father Hanley was also badly wounded in the right leg by the same shell, but he has since returned to the Regiment.

Some of the men told me weeks afterward that the bugle had sounded recall when we had reached the banks of the river. It was, however, unheard and unheeded. The battalion crossed the river and won the high ground behind. and the whole affair turned out well.

This field belonged to the whole Regi-

ment, for the whole outfit got into the stiffest kind of action in the country beyond the day's objective. The first and second battalions were in support of the Shamrock, and were to follow after and mop up. They followed so fast—and it was well for us that they did so—that, before half the high ground on the farther side of the river was won, they had overtaken us and we were fighting side by side. The losses of all three battalions were heavy.

Major Donovan, now Colonel, was in command of the first battalion and Major Anderson, now Lieutenant Colonel, of the second. These officers rushed their men into grips with the enemy, and thus, probably, saved what remained of the good old third battalion.

The Germans fought on doggedly. The advance became a give-and-take affair of first order. The push into the enemy lines

seemed to be lasting weeks where it was lasting hours. And the losses that marked our way grew heavier as evening fell. It certainly was a "bully" fight; the Old Sixty-ninth kept steadily pushing upward despite the German pressure down.

When darkness closed over the fighting lines, an order came through to Lieutenant Williams to return several hundred yards and make permanent trenches. This order dampened our enthusiasm. It is easier to fight one's way forward when thoroughly spent, hungry and exhausted with physical exertion and excitement than it is to dig trenches when in this condition. The men growled. They would have preferred keeping right on to Berlin to the digging of trenches at the end of that weary day.

In the army, however, an order is an order, and the impossible doesn't count. We fell back and scraped the ground deep

enough to make respectable defenses. Then, to keep the enemy in mind of the permanency of our occupancy of this newly rewon land of France, we sent out patrols to look for him in what was for the nonce No Man's Land. These patrols were in constant fights with the German patrols that night. We also had search parties out gathering up our wounded.

About two o'clock in the morning a runner came into our camp. He brought orders to continue the advance at four o'clock. These orders fell like a ton of lead upon each fagged member of the Company. There had been hard, constant, straining work from early the morning before. From the moment of the outbreak of the heavy enemy barrage up to the receipt of these orders the men had been going at their best, first fighting a stubborn enemy all day, much of the time at grips with him, and then con-

structing intrenchments and fighting again in the evening. The orders meant another hard go on top of a sleepless night and possibly on an empty stomach. It was not a cheerful prospect.

It was but a weak company, a weak battalion to press on with the drive. Lieutenant Williams looked thoughtful as he read the orders, but, although he doubtless thought it difficult to continue the attack with a fagged and almost wiped-out company, he called us together and said cheerfully:

"Boys, we're going at 'em again and clean 'em up at four A. M."

That meant the spending the rest of the night over the work of preparation. It was useless to think of sleep. And yet the spirit of the men was light; for they felt that they had the upper hand so definitely that they could not lose it no matter what their num-

ber or condition. All set to work shining up guns and bayonets, and our principal care was about whether we were going to get something to eat before hell started again, shelling still continuing as ever.

However, it did not start for us again that morning. About 3:30 o'clock another message came through to us. The Lieutenant greeted the runner with a smile, saying: "Well, have we orders to attack now?"

After reading the new orders, he told us that we were to be relieved by another battalion. We were to fall out of the line and go to the rear. Some of the men, deadly tired, growled at this, nevertheless, but, then, you can't in this world please everybody. Most of us, however, put on a Sunday smile.

Just about an hour later, while carrying a message, I suddenly stumbled into a gas attack. I put on my mask as quickly as possible, but not quickly enough. I had

gone through the whole battle unharmed to become a casualty in this prosaic fashion.

Gas attack was the last thing in my mind. I was so happy to think that I had come through the big ruction alive, that I had come through the hell at the Ourcq and on the hillside, that I was sure that nothing could happen to me. Then I stepped into the gas!

In a few minutes water was flooding from my smarting eyes, and the gas sickened me also. I was forced to stop at a first aid station for treatment. Here they refused to let me go on with my message. The message was of minor importance, but I wanted to get a treatment and get back to the company. It read: "We have started for the rear." I was loaded into an ambulance and sent to a field hospital. I was to enjoy other weeks of hospital life.

I learned afterwards that the boys stayed

in the Château Thierry vicinity until August 14. On the fifteenth, the Regiment was supplied with new clothing and marched to the rear. Most of the boys were granted a forty-eight-hour pass to Paris. Somehow I generally missed things over there.

Two members of my company, I learned when I rejoined, won the D. S. C. for the day's work before Château Thierry. These were Lieutenant Williams, who richly deserved his decoration, and Corporal Victor Van Yorx, who won it by gallant conduct, indeed. Corporal Van Yorx had been wounded in the arm early in the fight; sought treatment at a first aid station; hurriedly rejoined his men and fought all through the day until again badly wounded in the leg.

CHAPTER X

IN THE HOSPITAL AGAIN

THERE were many men of the Shamrock Battalion in the first aid station when I reached its shelter. Some of them were frightfully banged up, and hearing their sufferings made me ashamed to take even a moment of the doctor's care from them for treatment for gas.

The station was in a much-battered château. Three doctors were in charge, and these were assisted by some dozen orderlies. Every available bit of space in the place was filled with bad cases, and there was a steady stream of new arrivals as the searching parties were finding the severely wounded of the hard-fought field of the day before. Also

casualties of the fresh organizations who had taken the 165th's place were coming in.

Shortly before I reached the château an enemy shell had struck one corner, tearing this away and hurling its heavy débris upon a number of wounded in that part of the building. Some were killed. Some were wounded yet more severely. This had caused a speeding up in the evacuation of the building. Men were treated and sent back to the field hospital with all possible dispatch.

The doctors worked like a crew of ship's riveters after a great record. They wasted few movements and the perspiration glistened on their foreheads as they hurried from case to case. The doctor who cared for me, even to my weakened, smarting sight, seemed ashen gray and furrow-eyed from overstrain.

Captain Ryan, commander of Company

I, had a place near mine in the château. He had been hit twice, and each time badly. The second time an enemy bullet found him. To encourage his men, he called cheerily, "Boys, they didn't get me after all!"

Despite the many terrible cases that it harbored, the morale of this first aid station was high. All the men able to stand on their feet and make out to walk unaided went out to the headquarter's company's kitchen for cups of coffee, and many of these joked each other out of thoughts of their pain. These men brought coffee back to the men who could not walk.

Toward dark, after a patient day's wait, my turn came. My injury was slighter, and, of course, the serious cases were sent back before me. But, finally, my name was called; I was loaded on an ambulance, and taken to the field evacuation hospital, three

or four miles back of Château Thierry. Here we just changed ambulances.

Sometimes an ambulance journey rearward is a more discomforting thing than "going over the top." This trip was. It was a long one and over bad roads, and, moreover, we had the feeling that our driver did not know where he was going and, consequently, never would get there.

We were dismal about continuing the journey the same night, and, after being loaded into the new ambulance, were settled in mind to be uncomfortable. We did not disappoint ourselves. The gloom inside our carriage made the starless night seem brilliant by comparison.

The ride lasted most all night. In some places the chauffeur asked directions and regularly was told to go to some place whose name he had never heard before. He stopped once and inquired the way of a cou-

ple of Frenchmen, and these returned in their own peculiar accents that they did not understand ours. The driver then started out to find Non-compris.

One of the seriously wounded men shouted out at this juncture: "Don't you know where you're going yet? 'Cause if you don't know, I know where I'm going—West."

Later in the ride, this man, his wound stung by a bad jolt, biting a moan in two, called out again in tones of deep disgust: "Say, stop your buggy! I wanta get out an' walk."

In the gray dawn, we reached a field hospital—a collection of tents. Here, at the Receiving Office, we began by doing the usual thing, by reciting our pedigrees over again. Then we were assigned to our tents and given beds.

The first question always put to an orderly at a field hospital was: "How long do

you keep us here?" The answer this time was: "Maybe three or four days. Maybe a week." The men were always anxious to get back to the luxurious life of the base hospital.

Everybody spent their three days or a week here in wondering to what base hospital they were going. Some of the men had been wounded often enough to have preference. Others had stories of the experiences of comrades to guide their desires.

After passing three days here, most of our Château Thierry crowd were loaded into ambulances and taken to a nearby railroad station. Here we were put on an English hospital train. There was a wait of several hours before the train started, but finally start it did, and all the men wore holiday expressions to be going away from the sound of the guns to white beds, gentle nurses, wholesome meals and complete rest.

Talk on a hospital car and in a base hospital is always about the fine work of pals and it is filled with questions as to how this and that comrade made out. Hospital trains travel slowly, so that we had plenty of time to review the whole course of the last fight before the journey was at an end.

Two husky Tommies, orderlies, came through the cars about six o'clock in the evening with tea and jelly sandwiches. That jelly was a foretaste of what life in a hospital is to the man back from the front who is signed up for a world war. It represented to us everything good that civilization—by this, I mean America—contains.

The beds on the train were comfortable. They were arranged in tiers along the sides of the car, one man to a bed and each with two soft blankets. We stretched like newly-made plutocrats; there was a rumble along the car of "this is the life," and then we

slept like tops. Hospital life is the luxurious week end in the life of a soldier.

Next morning we were awakened by the Tommies and served with delicious, creamy bowls of oatmeal, coffee and jelly sandwiches. The oatmeal was a flight of high living almost beyond the power of imagination that had survived our drill and seasoning. The boys allowed the oatmeal to trickle gently upon their tongues and then to glide slowly down their throats. It was the first oatmeal that most of us had had since leaving home, and it provided us with an hour of flawless enjoyment.

The men who could get about carried abandoned luxury one step further. They had lazy wash-ups in the washrooms of the train; then fixed their beds against the wall, and leaned back on cushioned seats like tourists to enjoy the country. The hours for the men in these observation cars passed

quickly and comfortably. The gas cases, on the other hand, among whom I was one, had a special car to themselves, a dark car, but the eyes of most of us were in such condition that we could not have seen anything anyway.

The kitchen of our English hospital train was a good one. At noon time, a thick, fragrant, nourishing and delicious soup was brought through the cars. We were also given coffee and flaky white bread sandwiches. This fare may sound meager to the civilian, but it was all that the badly wounded man could stand. He cannot eat heavy things, and he neither craves, nor can his system support, much.

Notwithstanding the good care that was given to us, we wearied of the trip after the first day. The men continually asked the orderlies how much farther they had to go, and the answer was probably another day.

On the second day we were told that our destination would be reached about five o'clock the following morning.

The men brightened up immediately when they had obtained this definite information. It seems to be a characteristic of campaigning that the soldier never begins a journey anywhere but that he is perfectly miserable until he knows the exact time when that journey will end. Soldiering is a sequence of objectives, with all the way in between objectives filled with impatient restlessness. The wounded were awakened at five o'clock by the switching of the train on to a siding, and about six o'clock the train came to a standstill inside the hospital yard. It was, however, not unloaded until 8:30, and this occasioned more restlessness as the men were anxious to see the inside of their new home.

The hospital looked uninviting from without. It was Base Hospital 22. It looked

like a bleak barracks in the midst of a sand waste. Most of us, that is, of those of us who could see, after looking the place over, wanted to ride farther. The hospital lay about a mile and a half from the city.

The usual recital of one's life was given at the Receiving Office before one became a part of the official family. This continuous recitation of pedigree was the one bad feature in the otherwise splendid American hospital system. The British, I understand, took a man's history but once, at the first aid station, and then they pinned this history to the wounded man's clothing, and each doctor through whose hands this man subsequently passed added data of treatments and developments which kept this individual's history written up to date with a minimum of exertion and trouble to him.

On the other hand, the wounded American had to recite his history at each hospi-

tal through which he passed, beginning with: "In case of death, notify whom," and running through quite a list of inquiries.

At the Receiving Office the men were assigned to their barracks, and at the barracks the nurses assigned them to their beds. Uniforms and equipment were taken away and treated for cooties, and pajamas and bath robes were issued. Many of the men welcomed the hospital as the only means of relief from their body lice.

Uncle Sam set a mighty good table in his hospitals, a table which won fame among his soldiers all up and down the line and which caused the "corned-willie broken doughboy" to water in the mouth with anticipation, even while shattered bones were being set in first aid stations.

For our first meal at Base Hospital 22 dinner, we had creamy mashed potatoes, small peas, juicy boiled beef and coffee that

took one back to breakfast with home and mother. Such a meal is a state meal after weeks in the front area. After dinner we new arrivals were ordered back to our beds until the doctor should make his rounds.

The inside of the hospital was more comfortable than the outside was promising. The whole institution was in the midst of lively expansion. The work of making a hospital of very largest and most modern type hummed along all the time I was there. Uncle Sam was preparing for a long, hard war, and, at this place, he had both of his sleeves rolled up to his neck.

Some of the men whose wounds permitted got passes here to visit the city. I was not one of the lucky ones. I spent most of my time here—about a month and a half in all—writing letters home and to members of the company, my second home in France. The time passed quickly and pleasantly.

Then came the day when I was pronounced fit to continue doing my part. I was sent to the great Replacement Camp, St. Aginan, to be equipped and started back to my company. This was about the middle of September. We reported ready for duty at this camp, gave our pedigrees again, and received, a piece at a time, our equipment.

The Replacement Camp was very large, and filled with all kinds of soldiers from all branches of the service. There were raw troops here and there were casuals who had seen hard service in all parts of the front. This American city was about thirteen miles out of Paris.

The wounded men who reported themselves here as cured were classified, according to their physical conditions, in four grades, A, B, C, and D. Those who were classified as A men were sent back to their

companies as fit for active service. Men of B grade were kept behind the lines from three to six months. C grade men were kept behind the fighting line for the duration of the war. They were men whose injuries had been such as to unfit them for any further service in the field, and they were put into the various non-combatant services, such as prison guards, escort companies, etc. D grade men were sent from here back to America and discharged. I was lucky enough to be classified as of grade A.

Life in the Replacement Camp was tedious. We had to report at our barracks every fifteen minutes, and couldn't get out of earshot of the non-commissioned officer in charge without special permission, which was very hard to get. Moreover, the camp was overcrowded and we had to take turns at hiking about a mile out of camp for our

meals. All in all, it was a way station that one was glad to bid good-by to.

It was three or four days before my turn came to move on. These days seemed like months. On the fourth day I was told to be ready to proceed, and, with a large number of other men, I answered assembly around the tribune for roll call. Here we were gathered into groups of fifty and marched to the station to wait for our French Pullmans—late this time, as always.

About noon we were loaded into our box cars and had corned willie and hard tack served to us. The luxurious life of the hospital was at an end; we were going back to the front.

The train stopped at many queer places, in the uncertain way of a French schedule, and only dragged along between stops. It took us about three days to reach the com-

pany. These were days of hard traveling, days which have no resemblance to those spent in American Pullmans and parlor cars.

There were many men from my company and regiment returning with me, and we passed the time talking of the fight before Château Thierry. We all felt that we were going to get back just in time for another hot spell. The regiment had been having a quiet time during our weeks in the hospital, and we didn't think that the famous Irish regiment would be kept resting much longer.

After passing the town of Neufchâteau, our wheezy little toy locomotive quickened its gait. About ten miles farther along we saw a big sign: "42nd Division Headquarters"; and we knew we were home once more.

CHAPTER XI

THE "MILLION-DOLLAR SHOOT"

After a turn in the hospital, one feels like a prodigal son returning. In the station yard we were assembled in regimental groups, and marched out on our several ways. In was a three-mile hike to my battalion, and on the road I met many of my friends. Some of the company at least came through the last fight uninjured.

There were many new faces in the company, and on my first night it seemed to me that most of the old crowd was gone. After the customary first questions of the returned wanderer: "What time is reveille?" and "What times do we drill here?" we settled down to the life of the company again.

The regiment was now in camp back of the lines in the Toul sector.

We were kept hard at drill during this time, but there was a change in the spirit of the drill. The men were kept steadily over studies of open warfare, of the warfare of movement; it was evident that there was a surprising change from the lazy war of position in store for our German opponents.

All our drills were based on the attack, on storming difficult positions, on patrolling work; and these drills were spiced with plenty of bayonet practice. The boys enjoyed this work.

Moreover, this new, active drill filled the men with the proper spirit. They enjoyed this work at open warfare, for they felt that the A. E. F. was about to begin a sustained offensive, to begin a push that was to end only with the German army hung at the full end of its rope, to carry out a Pershing plan

for the capture of Berlin and the Kaiser's mustache.

About the middle of September we started back to the front. There were no trucks or French Pullmans this time. It was a hike. The company was under new command, that of Lieutenant Guigon, formerly of Company E. The men of the company were glad to get to work again, because, somehow, they were confident that this time we were out to clean things up.

The way in the beginning led through country in which the Shamrock Battalion had first trained, and so some of the old men started the rumor that we were going into rest camp for the winter. The conjecture was that we had done our share through the summer, and that now the men of the National Army would carry on the winter's work. This conjecture, however, found little acceptance.

The march began at nightfall, undoubtedly to conceal our troop concentrations from the enemy. The heavens poured themselves down in torrents all night long; the roads churned up in gluey mud, and every few steps we splashed deep into pools of water. Our equipment was soaked; our clothes were soaked; and every yard our pack seemed to gain a ton in weight.

Probably it was the badness of the weather which inspired the guess that we were going into winter quarters. The men thought it would be good to remain in this country because they knew the towns, and they mentioned different cafés, restaurants and shops with the easy pride of familiarity. In this destrict at least the Shamrock Battalion knew its France.

We passed through our training district during the night, and, leaving it behind, we left behind all hopes of winter quarters. On

Sunday morning we halted in a small, unknown town, weary from our rainsoaked hike and each of us glad to crawl into a warm haymow for some sleep. It was a hard job to find sufficient quantities of straw and hay, but our blankets were oozy with water and our clothes were wet, so we put snap into our search.

The battalion turned in for a good day's sleep and woke up nearly dry. About four o'clock in the afternoon orders came to pack and about six o'clock we started on our way. It was a dark night, and threatened rain again. As it was, the roads were almost quagmires and plowing through them was fatiguing. Our packs were still heavy with moisture.

The Shamrock Battalion by now, however, was as hard as nails, so these little discomforts were taken by the boys in philosophic spirit, and they laughed and joked the

bad conditions out of half of their terror. We hiked the night through and put up next morning in a small French town. The second day of a long hike is generally the hardest, and most of us that day slept well past our midday mess and had to get along on two meals.

In the evening the battalion got under way again. By now every one was impatient to be at the "next objective." The consensus was that it was time for the "Rainbow" "to give 'em hell again," and there was some scattering by-comment on this of "Why do they pick on us?"

The night was thick and the ways were soupy. The air was raw and muggy to breathe, and before us ran the way, a ribbon of just a bit blacker black than the night. One C. C. H. (Company Crêpe Hanger, an A. E. F. term of wide currency) insisted upon telling an unwilling audience that it

was an ill-omened blackness. We tracked through several woods, pushing at times through thick underbrush which snapped with elastic viciousness against our legs and bodies and sprinkled us thoroughly with water drops. We seemed to be heading straight into the wilderness.

About five next morning, the hike was halted in the midst of a woods, a primeval fastness somewhere north of the Toul sector. The ground here was thickly carpeted with brush and other growths in our small clearing, and so wet that the spent marchers were undecided about stretching out in the water and dank sogginess for a sleep. Tents were pitched, nevertheless, and all remained quiet.

The way had again fallen within the sound of the guns, and these told to us in their droning that we had guessed right—that we were bound to take part in Pershing's

Putover Push. Somehow this conviction made us sleep better; made us rest easier in mind and in body. One develops a queer personality in the field!

Packs were rolled up at dusk, and the battalion made its way through a narrow and interminably long lane through the trees and underbrush, and the blackness was pitchier, if possible, than the night before.

It was No Man's Land, this dark, rusty, soaked woods, ragged, unkempt and harried by gun fire. No sane man would have claimed it. It was a jumping off place for jungle beasts, evil spirits and head hunters. It was a place to wish on one's worst enemy.

The march continued for several hours, when the battalion pulled out of the woods into open, sodden fields, whose clayey surfaces clung to our heavy shoes and marched on with us against the enemy. It was a case

of even the soil of France going more than half way to meet the insulting invader.

Shell holes were strewn thickly about here, and, seeing these, the battalion knew that it was home again. It looked as though the breath of battle had scorched over these fields many times. There was also much wreckage and waste about.

All manner of traffic jammed over these fields and toward a woods before us. It seemed that the whole A. E. F. was pouring this way, with an endless clutter of men and guns and food for men and guns. The ways were thrashed into creamy mud, and through this clogging gumminess wagons and guns fought impossible ways, oiled all along with curses and cynical jests. Slowly this tremendous aggregate of striking power wallowed forward toward the German, slowly, ponderously, firmly. It sloughed through

the morass and smashed through thickets, but it went stolidly, solidly forward.

The battalion finally reached the wood ahead. It took us some five hours to make seven kilometers on account of the traffic jam. We found the wood a place filled with beaten paths, and lots of French ammunition was scattered around in the mud. There were shanties here, and dugouts, and concealed gun positions, all now abandoned. They belonged to some past chapter of the war.

"This time to-morrow, where will we be?" shouted some one.

"Back in rest camp," another answered.

"Like fun," exclaimed a lieutenant, "you'll be sprouting daisies maybe then."

This was not gruesome badinage. It was just good-humored, playful persiflage. It was just as the army knows the lighter vein when in the field.

The woods were cold, damp and dreary, and as we slept a chilly wind rippled icy puddles against our necks and down our shirt collars. However, we slept well; we were tired.

About seven o'clock in the morning word came that we must hurry our advance, that we had no time to lose. There had been but mighty little sleep, but we were glad to speed out of this wet nightmare. We set out at a hearty pace.

By one o'clock in the afternoon the battalion had overtaken its schedule, and it unrolled packs again and finished the morning's sleep. Orders came to move on early in the evening. This was September 22. With the orders came the news that one of the biggest barrages ever heard in France was to be laid down upon the Germans at sharp one o'clock next morning.

About eight o'clock we began a slow ad-

vance. After some time of cautious movement we quickened our pace. There was considerable ground to be covered so that we should be in our positions before the great barrage started, and we were soon off to our part of the line on the double-quick. About twenty minutes to one we reached an open field, fringed with hills, and the men wondered where the trenches ran.

It was unusually quiet along the line—the deadly quiet before the storm. One could hear an out-season cricket chirp. The hills were silent, frowning, black splotches against the night, and the stillness which brooded over them seemed to presage the thunderclap that was to come. These hills were considerable protection to us later when the enemy's guns awakened.

As soon as we had taken our positions in the open field we learned that we were a supporting company. The first and the sec-

ond battalions were ahead of us. We also learned that we were to follow in after these in the morning. While waiting each was ordered to dig an individual hole for shelter. It was nearly time for the music to start when we began digging.

At one o'clock to the second, one of our guns sounded the hurricane, and two minutes later every gun along the line—thousands of them—had answered the call in a way which shook the hills to their eternal foundations. It was a magnificent storm of steel that winged its way of demolition into the enemy's country, rocking the land all about and fairly splitting the eardrums. The shells seemed to be falling in blankets of steel and explosive over there beyond us, and the men, while they listened, were spellbound.

We wondered what had seized upon the Germans' guns, for we waited and waited

in vain for their answer. There probably was no answer to that leveling hail that the Americans put over on the morning of the first big all-American offensive. It was the deadliest gunfire that I heard during my stay in France, and German prisoners told us that never before had they been called upon to face such a withering storm.

Our barrage kept the air in boiling agony until seven o'clock, when it slackened and the advance of the doughboys was on. The first and second battalions of the "Fighting Irish" were off on the first leg of that advance which stunned even our Allies when the report of its rapidity reached them. They ran over the first opposition before the enemy had opportunity to catch its breath after the terrors of the tremendous battering by our guns. They continued to overrun all opposition throughout the day, to romp

over nerve-shattered and demoralized Germans.

We started slowly at the beginning, keeping under cover and going forward in open battle formation, but quickened our pace when the battalions ahead began cleaning up what remained of the dazed enemy at such breakneck gait. The attack degenerated into a double quick rollick forward in a go-as-you-please and get-there-as-fast-as-possible line of battle.

We ourselves saw no signs of the Germans. "This life," one of the men yelled, "is easy"; and all who heard him agreed with him. We found no resistance, and word came back that the first battalion was sweeping up the rest of the enemy as easily as one sweeps a floor. There were later some sporadic attempts of the enemy guns to answer our fire, and now and again a shell landed near us. Pershing's gunners, how-

ever, had orders, probably, from the Old Chief, to put this affair over handsomely, so that the A. E. F. might hand itself a bouquet without a weed in it, and it did not take them long to silence even modest enemy attempts to throw answers back to the Yankee guns. They silenced each outburst of German fire almost before it got under way.

For six hours we kept going over the ground at a reckless clip before we saw the first group of prisoners dragging its way over a hill in front of us. There were enough of these to constitute a standard American company. At this point the prisoners began dribbling in on all sides in knots, groups, platoons, battalions. They were a dejected looking lot.

A raw wind sprang up and was soon lashing over the field. This keyed up our rapid advance. Such a fast pace into the foe's

country on a hot day would have been intolerable. But, in view of the chill weather, the speed which we had to maintain in our endeavor to overtake our front battalion in their endeavor to overtake the German resistance served to keep up a healthy circulation. Pershing's first big offensive was the last word in speed!

We learned that evening that we had gone far beyond our objectives. It had been easy all the way, though the pace was a little heavy, the boys were perspiring and their packs were pressing on them hard. Then there was dissatisfaction here and there in the ranks that we had had no share in what little fighting there had been to go around. All the "million-dollar shoot" had left to us was a tame sprint forward.

We worked our way to the top of a hill standing along, whence we could see by the smoke that the Germans at last were trying

to put over a big answering barrage. We could also see defiant, deep-sided Mount Sec which had been captured early in the day by the men of the First Division. Travelers who pass this way in future days will wonder how men ever took this place at all, will wonder how it was possible to climb such a formidable hill at the double quick even unopposed. The hill had cost the lives of 40,000 French four years before, whereas the First Division took it from the Germans on a sprint up bare rock sides without the loss of a man. Probably it was the feature of a very fast day. It gave a very fair idea of what hellish manner of fire had fallen from the American guns to have broken the spirit of the defenders of such a place. "Pershing's Army would have held that hill, had the Angels of Darkness advanced against it on the charge," one of the boys remarked.

This hill was one of Germany's strongest fortifications along the line. She had worked continually to strengthen its great natural strength since the early days of the war. If any place deserved the characterization of "impregnable" this did. It was such a place as, defended strongly, should have wiped out a division.

The battalion took its way back to the foot of the hill and dug in. The orders were to hold this ground during the night. It was cold and wet, but every one felt at home after crawling into a shell hole and curling up for sleep. A few of the boys, after digging their hotels for that evening, wandered off to inspect the field, its dugouts and the little ruined towns nearby. They discovered considerable stuff that Fritz had abandoned in his hasty flight. In fact, this field was the one El Dorado that the battalion found in France.

There were iron crosses, officer's boots, writing paper, postcards and beer a-plenty in the abandoned German dugouts. There were sausages, wines, and pumpernickel. One returned loaded down with medals, officers' belts, side arms and nicknacks. It was the richest field over which the "Rainbow" ever prospected.

The innumerable things that the Germans left behind here went to prove that the million-dollar shoot had taken them unawares and that it had aroused their enthusiasm for strategic retreat as no other experience in the war had done.

The American forces had a sound and hearty sleep that night and in their dreams planned fishing excursions on the Rhine. One of the boys suggested that the tempo of the skyscraper builders and the steam-plowed prairies was getting into the world war at last and that now the jig was up with

the German. As we snored that night in various unmusical keys we felt that when we once got going nothing that Fritz had up his sleeve could ever stop us. This may, unfortunately, sound a bit boastful; but it is a faithful reproduction of the A. E. F. morale.

The battalion being called just before daylight, rolled packs hurriedly and pushed off again. There was very little artillery action. It was like a New England Sunday in comparison with the thunderous, devastating hurricane that had poured out of our guns the day before.

The advance continued all day. There was a bit of stiffening of resistance, but not enough noticeably to impede progress. The boys kept right on, over fields, up hills, through woods and brambles, and over bridges, of which the Germans had the accurate range, but, anyway, they did little

to stop us. And all day long the prisoners kept drifting by us to the rear, large groups of them escorted by six or seven doughboys of the First and Second battalions. We could only look on.

The enemy strengthened his shell fire. From the hills we saw his gathering lines in the woods, fields and hills beyond. It was apparent that he was beginning to recover from the narcotic of the big gun play. At times we even had to take temporary cover from his reawakened shrapnel fire.

About three o'clock that afternoon, September 25, we halted and dug ourselves in. It seemed that we had been advancing too fast and were closing up on the first and second battalions. We were much less interested about orders or the enemy, however, than we were about dinner. The battalion grumbled through that halt, wondering when and where it was going to eat.

During the pause in operations we looked around upon the fearfully devastated country, and it gave us some idea of how the enemy must have been demoralized by our guns. The first battalion that day was doing the heavy work and the second was cleaning up. We learned that the resistance at the front was growing steadily stronger.

But in this country, in the terrain where we were resting, shells had gouged everything. Many of the dugouts had been destroyed by direct hits and gun emplacements had been pounded to powder. The country was ruined.

The battalion had reached some places that morning just as the Germans were frantically digging their way with bleeding knuckles out of their smashed-in dugouts. Some men wore the flesh away to the bone in such struggles against death by burial

alive. And they were taken to the rear jabbering and yelping in pain.

The advance was again ordered. This time the way lay through a swamp, and going was hard. Still, beyond the swamp on a road ahead, we saw kitchens, which fact made the go through the swamp the most spirited go of the day. We were famished.

The C. C. H.'s said that these kitchens were those of the first and second battalions, but others insisted that they recognized the Shamrock Battalion's mules. The kitchens were drawn up on the edge of the road by the side of a wood, and the men kept advancing toward them snappy and elastic. Then the Germans woke up.

Somewhere beyond our kitchens the enemy had a few batteries posted which still possessed some spirit and *strafe-lust* and with these they laid down on us a fire of high explosives and shrapnel. They caused

us some losses, but not many. We reached the woods and smelled the food and forgot the whole damn war over our splendid appetites.

A halt was made in the cover of the woods and the men were sent, one at a time, from the wood to the kitchens, where they were given hot stew, bread and coffee. It was such a feast that even shrapnel and H. E.'s added only a sauce piquante.

The stew was a princely stew and the coffee was good. Sergeant Wilfred T. Van Yorx was the new mess sergeant, and the men all gave him a hearty welcome because they knew that if there was anything to eat anywhere in sectors which we might occupy that he would fight to get a plentiful supply for the company. We knew that, as long as food kept up with us, Sergeant Van Yorx would see to it that Company K got its full share.

The battalion was ordered to rest up in this wood all night, and the information came to us that the first battalion had reached its main objective and was holding this with the assistance of the second.

The next orders of the Shamrock were to take positions nearer the defending battalions and to expect a German counter attack. This counter attack was looked for momentarily, and it was expected that the Germans would come back for this important territory in desperate force.

We took our way toward a main line of railroad which led into the great German fortress of Metz, and just beyond this, in a long line of trench with plentiful caves dug in its banks, we settled down for the day, getting the best sleep here that we had had since the excitement started.

"Stand to" was ordered early next day as the German attack was expected. There

was not much of a barrage coming over, nor any other signs that Fritz had it in mind to come over and learn more about us. However, it was confidently expected that he would try to turn us out of our new positions.

But Fritz's attack never came. He knew, mayhap, that we would break any such attack as we had broken his storming ranks before, and so preferred to avoid any unnecessary wastage of men. Many planes were up but they reported that the Germans were quiet, and the day passed over us with hardly a ripple of warfare.

The battalion remained in this position three or four days, while the first and second built up the front lines. Then orders came to move back. We took these orders to mean that we were through in this sector and were to be sent again to some livelier zone. St. Mihiel had convinced us that

the Old Man had taken hold of the German situation to stay, and therefore we expected very little rest from now on.

We guessed wrong. We were not yet through with the sector. We were sent to the left of the line to relieve another organization. It was muddy and dreary, and, above all, painfully quiet here, and the boys sickened of these new positions after a few hours of occupancy. We builded and fortified here.

Release came on October 6, when the battalion was marched out under shell fire, the first we had heard in some time, and another organization marched in.

It was about ten o'clock at night when we left the line, and for some reason the German gunners had wakened up just a little earlier. Their shells accompanied us down the road, and, while passing a town under their guns, the regiment had a few casual-

ties. The kitchen of Company A was struck fairly by a shell, a cook was killed and a number of K. P.'s wounded.

By five o'clock we were out of range of the guns and at dawn we put up in a wood for the day. Beds were made as comfortable as the resources of the wilderness afforded, and, after a brief look around, the men fell asleep to forget the loneliness of the place. There wasn't a sign of life around us anywhere within reach of a long-ranged gun.

Some of the men insisted the next morning that the outfit was now in for a coddling, but the C. C. H. bawled out: "Hell, we're going to something worse!"

And he was right. We went to the Argonne Forest.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST GREAT PUSH

THE Argonne Forest was a whirlwind fight from its one impregnable end to the other. Organizations were thrown in, fought until worn to shreds, withdrawn, and immediately replaced by others. The battle blazed through this hell-trap day and night, and day and night the Yankee doughboy went forward. He was on the road to Berlin at last, and he tore through a wilderness thick with treacherous death, through thickets woven full of barbed wire and defended by tree-hidden snipers, over hills and through gullies in the face of machine gun fire and through ten thousand pitfalls regardless of sacrifice and of sufferings. And the Germans in vain thinned their lines else-

where and threw in everything they had to check him. The fall of the impregnable Argonne meant the fall of Metz, the winning of the Rhine, the crushing of the German, the winning of the war—and a return to God's country. The Old Man had decided that he wanted this devilish forest, and the doughboys decided that they would not give it to him if they had to kill every man of Central Europe in its godless, dark, torturing fastnesses. The Argonne was a man's-sized fight, and it was carried right to Fritz every step of the trail in a way that shook his last hold upon himself. General John J. Pershing got his woods and in such rush order that it astonished everybody but him.

The Shamrock Battalion scrambled out of its muddy wood behind the St. Mihiel sector after the day's rest and headed for the civilized back area once more. The road was a smooth road and the battalion traveled

fast all night. About five in the morning it reached another wet wood and turned in here for a second day's primitive rest.

Camping out in a wet wood with one's clothes wet through and a feeling of sogginess even in one's dreams is an adventure that soon stales. We were out on the road again at six at night, and some one suggested that the outfit should have been named the "night-owl battalion," while another thought that our hours would make even Old Broadway jealous.

Most interest centered, as usual, on the beginning of a hike, as to where we were going, when we would get there, and what we would find when we landed. Some thought we were going back into a rest camp, but most of us had noticed that we seemed to be paralleling the line, never going beyond earshot of the guns.

The way was through civilized country

again. We passed through towns on our march and saw farm buildings here and there. Later on, we got our geographical bearings when we passed through the French fortress of Toul. This gave us the idea that we were headed for devilment again.

We put up for the day a few miles out of Toul, and enjoyed the luxury of being quartered again in a small town, though by all American measurements it was a sad one. Here, we slept through the day and, at night, the news reached us that we were to continue in this place for the night and draw out our sleep. That extra bit of sleep that the authorities allowed us was a sure sign that they planned sleepless work for us ahead, and soon.

The battalion took to the road again 9 o'clock in the morning. It was a smooth, hard road, and the day was bright with sunshine. There was just the right crispness

in the air, and it recalled to us delicious autumn days at home.

Several field hospitals were scattered along the road, and there were military depots, stray farm houses and shaggy villages to break the monotony of the tramp. It was a prince of a march compared with our night hikes in the water-soaked forests around St. Mihiel.

The battalion turned many corners during the day's march, and, around one of these corners there appeared on a weather-beaten sign post "Verdun." We were heading straight for trouble again, and by the shortest route. When we had put Verdun, with its shambles, behind us, we felt that the American eagle was about to begin a muss which must end with the pulling of all of the tail feathers out of the German imperial bird.

We inclined to the left of Verdun and

marched all that day to a very small town on the outskirts of that famous French battlefield. Leaving this town in the morning, the battalion wound its way through acres of graves filled with the defenders of Le Morte Homme and the forts of Verdun, through a country where the air for weeks had seethed with shells of all descriptions, where the earth had been tortured in wild billows, where the kiss of death had fallen on thousands upon thousands of agonized but determined defenders.

Hundreds of thousands of men of two armies had fought like so many maniacs over every foot of this country, and the horror, the sublime horror, of that struggle was written plainly everywhere. Such wild suffering had been borne in the narrow confines of this field as would break the heart of any one but faintly realizing it. The word "Verdun," like "Château Thierry," put vim

and snap into the men; to try conclusions with the Germans with a dive into their lines before two such historic fields was honor enough for any outfit. In a way we felt that the High Command had a soft spot in its heart for the "Fighting Irish"; that is, we felt all the *élan* of crack fighting corps.

The Shamrock Battalion had gone after Fritz before Château Thierry and had lived up to the best traditions of this hard fought field, and we made up our minds that we'd gild the gold of the French fight at Verdun, given half a chance before this other famous field. The Shamrock Battalion was out to make its mark in another famous sector.

By three o'clock we reached a straggling village on the edge of the strongest German stronghold in France, the Argonne Forest. It was the first article of faith of the German Staff that the Argonne Forest was untakable, and hitherto their opponents

had agreed with them. The forest itself was a natural obstacle of greatest difficulty, a wilderness of rough country, cut with narrow valleys, twisting gullies, sharp, unexpected hills, nasty hollows, and always choked with heavy tree and underbrush growth. Moreover, the Germans had worked upon the defenses of this natural entanglement from the early days of the war, multiplying Nature's pitfalls a hundred times, strewing the whole with devil machines and hidden mines, and weaving the toughest thickets with thousands of yards of barbed wire, thus making every natural obstacle into a small fortress, menacing some apparent line of enemy advance. When they had finished with their labors they thought they could hold the forest until the crack of doom and they were justified in this confidence.

Remicourt was our halting place. We

noticed that this was regimental, as well as divisional, headquarters, so we thought that we were at our journey's end. We were disappointed. In a few minutes we were put in motion again and continued on our way until eleven o'clock at night, when we reached the first-line trenches in the Argonne.

On the last lap of our way we passed many dead Germans and Americans, which showed that amenities had begun. The way was also somewhat torn with shell fire, and abandoned material was strewn here and there on the ground.

The lines, we found, consisted of many well protected shell holes, stretching in a line just below the crest of a hill. The battalion was soon arranged for the coming fight, companies I and M being placed in the line and companies K and L acting as support. This time the Shamrock Battalion

was the war-head of the regiment. The first battalion was stationed about two kilometers behind in support of us, while the second was held five kilometers in the rear in reserve. Each battalion, in the ensuing battle, however, fought until "bled white." When the old Regiment was withdrawn, it was mostly on the casualty list.

Here we began immediately with preparation for the opening of the big drive on October 14. The methods of attack and its general plan were explained with great patience and thoroughness. All the officers and non-commissioned officers were drawn up before Major Reilly, now in command of the Shamrock, and the proposed move was explained to them in careful detail by the use of maps. We worked out that little plan beforehand with all the precision for which Fritz himself is noted.

As the minute hands of the officers'

watches snapped on to nine on the morning of the fourteenth, we were off in battle formation with a heavy barrage traveling on before. The movement started off as exactly as though each man and gun were controlled by the same electric circuit, and it broke into full vigor at the outset.

The Germans replied with force almost immediately, and our casualties began on the very edge of our own shell holes. This was not to be the walk-away of St. Mihiel. The Germans knew the value of this position as well as we, and they intended to defend it as stubbornly and as recklessly as the French defended Verdun. This fight was to be a duel—that is, the fight for the Argonne Forest—until German or American finally let slip the weapon from bloodless and nerveless fingers.

The way of our attack led up and down hill, over bowlders, through heavy patches

of brambles and young saplings, between heavy trees, gullies, hollows and knolls wooded into dark, uncanny recesses, with here and there barbed wire worked in with devilish ingenuity. From what I have seen and heard, I believe that the Argonne Forest saw its fill of horror during the weeks that the doughboys worked their way through it.

Companies I and M led off. They were in the fight hot from the first jump out of the trenches, some Germans in their anxiety to make an impression coming part way to meet them. We could plainly see the companies ahead. Their taut lines were meeting a very bad situation from the start and meeting it well. The Shamrock was off to take and pass its objectives.

Even though the wood was very thick, the doughboys had their eyes opened, and many a beautiful individual fight developed

unawares for the German doing execution from what he thought was safe hiding. Every bad tangle was a machine gun nest, and every tree was a turret. I saw men in front jump head-on into what appeared to be pathless thickets, and disappear, head and shoulders, below ground. Later, they would emerge, their bayonets clotted with red.

A stinging fire, from all angles, was pouring over the rough field of action upon us. The whole front was a series of individual actions and short-ranged duels. The pace slackened a little, and companies L and K caught up. The Germans dropped a powerful barrage behind us, to cut us off, and their snipers in the high trees devoted themselves to companies L and K, as offering fair targets in a safe field. Our casualties lessened somewhat when we reached the front line of fighting.

There was every available German in this forest. When they felt certain about our offensive intentions, they placed every man they could spare here, stripping the French and the English fronts to do so. It was vital to hold the forest. Moreover, they knew that the Americans called this the "road to Berlin," and they felt that if the doughboys once got through here it must prove fatal to Germany. They used their men here—the pick of their veterans—utterly regardless of losses, and sent ever fresh forces into the Argonne's inferno. They were well prepared for the Shamrock Battalion when it started over, and each yard forward found resistance wilder and wilder.

The fighting reached its highest possible point about eleven o'clock that morning, and hung at this point all day. Each man was putting into the fight all of his strength, all of his skill as a marksman, all of his acute-

ness of vision, and all that he had learned about fighting against men in cover.

The paths that led to the enemy machine gun nests were almost unthinkably bad, yet they were rushed, front-on, again and again and again. Despite the intensity of our barrage, hundreds of these hidden forts, which vomited their endless streams of lead, were left ready to stop us. These were taken one at a time, in headlong charge, by encircling, by being stumbled upon accidentally, fallen into, and captured after silent arguments with blood-dripping bayonets.

Our men fell everywhere along the line. They would break out before a thicket, and far ahead the rat-a-tat would sing and a man would lie clawing frenziedly at stones and tangled roots. They would straighten up and run forward toward a suspicious thicket, when, crack! from some tree ahead, crack! crack! crack! and the doughboys would move

forward, leaving some of their number in death convulsions on the ground and others sorely wounded. But sooner or later they got the man in the tree for full payment, and sooner or later they got the hidden machine gun men. They kept on until they got their price for the comrades they lost; and then they kept on.

Many of our men's lives were saved here by the despised tin hats. Bullets striking these hats had a curious effect. They produced for some moments all the symptoms of shell-shock. It made the man struck, moreover, very nervous for a long time after the hit. As hundreds of Germans here were firing from secure places in the trees before us, many were struck on their hats.

Rifle parties picked the enemy from trees like rotten apples. As a man here and there fell, the keen-sighted doughboys located the tree and the offender and the dangerous

fruit was soon thereafter yielded up. It was a gruesome, eerie, nerve-straining hunting; but then, we conjectured, Fritz's nerves were as much put to it as ours, and when one has this happy thought there's nothing more to worry about.

Between twelve and one o'clock we reached our objective, clothes torn, tongues hanging out, bathed in sweat, shin-sore and foot-sore. It was a small town and semi-clearing in the forest. Here the line paused for a breath, but it went on later and lived up to the Shamrock's record. However, it was from this general line that the first battalion later took up the work.

Toward the end of this fight I had about made up my mind that the Germans hadn't cast any bullet yet which could find me, though they had discovered a number of brands of gas which seemed to have a way of finding out my weak points. Time and

again I had turned corners, crossed stretches and passed beneath fruit-bearing trees, and, beyond, had paused a moment in surprise at finding myself still alive, until I had become convinced that I was bullet-proof. Then my theory was rudely disproved.

About twelve-thirty I was leading my men in an advance into the clearing. I was ten or fifteen paces in the lead and just before a shallow shelter-hole, when I spied a German sniper in a tree close at hand. I just caught the glint of the barrel as it thrust through the leaves toward me, and the next moment, with a warning signal to those behind me, I slipped into the shelter-hole. My sniper, however, could see me here rather plainly.

There had been a number of casualties as we came into the open, and this was the man, I felt, who had caused them. I took careful aim with my rifle in front of me at a deeper

shade of dark in the tree foliage, though I could distinguish nothing of him but occasionally his barrel which now and then caught the glint of outer light. His cover was excellent.

The tree was twenty yards up a hill before me. I had an unpleasant feeling that my sniper saw me very plainly and that he was to have all the advantage in the duel we had to fight. I fired several shots at him, nicking the foliage around his nest but apparently doing no other damage than that of increasing the earnestness of his attention for me.

He took careful aim—I could feel the deliberate care of this aim—and his shot took some splinters from my gun, shaking me up a bit. I began to fire more rapidly and as carefully as I could, considering that I could see little more than a suggestion of my ad-

versary's whereabouts. It was to be one or the other of us.

We exchanged a dozen shots more or less. The ground around me was hit several times. Finally, he delayed his fire. Probably, I thought, my shots are getting pretty close, and he's determined now to save his skin by making sure of ending me—a very natural and worthy determination.

I had loaded again and was taking aim, when his rifle rang out and instantly I felt a sharp stab in my left hand, extended and holding my barrel. He had scored, hitting me on the knuckle of my left hand, tearing this knuckle away and ripping up the bones and flesh. He fired several more shots, and as I couldn't answer I suppose he concluded he had killed me and searched for other game.

My shelter hole was isolated from our line. I was afraid that I might be made a pris-

oner, though I resolved, if things looked that way, that I would make a run for our lines. The men under my command were sheltered behind me, and I tried to form some plan for rejoining them.

There was another doughboy near me, I discovered, upon the left. I worked my way over to him, arousing the sniper to a trial shot, or so, and got this man to adjust the bandage over my shattered hand. I warned him of the sniper.

About fifteen yards to the rear I saw our men fixing machine gun positions, and I made up my mind that I was going back and tell them to get the sniper who got me and might get others, even though I must offer a splendid target to this poisoned fruit. I started back, and, as I foresaw, the sniper opened fire.

I fell flat and crawled over the ground as low and as fast as I could, and then I

changed this maneuver by jumping to my feet, running a few steps and then falling flat and crawling again. Finally I got back to our gunners, though, with the sniper potting away, it had seemed some considerable stretch.

I told them of the sniper and they turned a barrage on the tree. I saw my late opponent fall out like an overripe tomato. Then the guns combed some neighboring trees for luck, combed a thicket ahead, swept around upon the wood, and, for the moment, ceased the venomous spitting.

It was getting along toward dark. In some places the line had gone forward, and in some places it was so weakened by losses that all it could do was hold. The enemy fire increased again. The field before us was swept with a hail of machine gun and rifle fire, while far behind us the Germans held down a powerful barrage to keep back all

reënforcements. No relief came and no messages came through.

I stayed with the men until six o'clock. It would have been madness to attempt to go to the rear. I couldn't even use my rifle to defend myself, and so wouldn't even have had a sporting chance. However, I was greatly weakened from loss of blood and restless from the pain of my wound. Finally, one of the officers, noticing my condition, ordered me to the rear.

It was still more dangerous to go back than it was to go forward. The German barrage still hung like a heavy curtain over our communications. Our wounded, nevertheless, began to filter through the interstices of this curtain on their way to the dressing station, and I joined the train.

On the way back I saw men being carried with legs shattered, with blood-drenched clothes from the flow of ghastly body

wounds, and I passed one man sitting against a tree with half of his head torn away, probably one who had tried to make his way back to the dressing station when caught by a German shell. He must have seated himself here after the first shock to rest and have died moments later.

At the dressing station, where I arrived half-fainting from weakness, after almost giving over the effort to walk a number of times before I got there, my wound was dressed, washed with iodine, and bandaged. So badly wounded were some of the men brought in that the place called to mind nothing so strongly as an abattoir, with human beings as victims. One look around this station and I felt that I had no right on account of my slight wound to be here.

The dressing station was cleared quickly, the doctors working with feverish haste to dispatch the men back where they might

receive more careful treatment. The American Medical Service saved many lives by its expedition in getting men from the field back to hospitals and operating tables in all emergency cases. We were loaded on big army trucks and ambulances here and sent to Evacuation Hospital 110.

This place was crowded. It opened the eyes of the medical officers, this steady stream of wounded that was pouring from the hopper of the Argonne battlefield. They saw that the push through to "the open road to Berlin" was on in fair and bitter earnest. They were very eager for the latest news from the front, but that was hard to give, for the Argonne front changed day and night forwards until the doughboys broke through the barrier on their way to the Germain plains.

We were bathed, clothed in pajamas, and then sent through the operating room.

When my turn came, I feared not so much the loss of my hand—to my untrained eyes the wound seemed to be so hideous that I was convinced it was a case for amputation—but I did fear the taking of ether. I had never taken ether and I was frightened lest it make me deathly sick when I came out of its power. One gets used to the thought of operations, but one never becomes hardened to thoughts of stomach trouble and nausea.

The operation on my hand was performed at four o'clock, and I was awakened feeling bright and cheerful next day by a Red Cross nurse in time for midday mess. I woke up to a sense of a clean white bed and a sympathetic woman's face, and concluded that I was still under the influence of ether.

I stayed at this hospital three days. On the second day, when the doctor came around, I was helping with the dressings

of other wounded. My hand was not bothering me much. I could not tell from the feeling what they had done to it, and I was not anxious to find out.

The doctor took charge of me, and when he had unwound the bandages, I found that the middle finger had been taken off and that a deep hole, like an inverted cone, extended into my hand. When he started cleaning the wound around loose nerves, my hair stood up straight with the pain of it.

On the third day, I was loaded with others on an American Red Cross train, the most comfortable transportation I had while in France, and was off for Somewhere in France, off for a base hospital and a spell in a real home.

CHAPTER XIII

GOD'S COUNTRY AGAIN

It is fitting here to pause and go back to my comrades. I had left them at six o'clock, and the battle was glaring just as red and hateful when I stumbled back through the gloom of the forest as it had at midday. The Shamrock Battalion, bleeding white and under heaviest pressure, battled on until midnight. No word or relief had come through, and there remained nothing else than to hold the ground won until the last man became a casualty. Weakened, but willing, the battalion kept slowly but firmly pushing beyond their objective. Eighteen hours of most bitter fighting found them still on the offensive.

By midnight the first battalion had made

its way through the enemy's barrage to relieve the frayed and shattered Shamrock. What was left of the old fighting organization dragged its way back through the shell fire, its task accomplished, with considerable extras for good measure, and its morale as high as when it had jumped forward on the dot of the time set that morning.

The first battalion took up the fight with a new rush into the enemy's lines; there was hardly a break in the fire as the two battalions changed, and the flames of the fight did not diminish but rather increased with each added hour. The first won its way, foot by foot, against superior numbers and with heavy losses. It was relieved, spent and thinned, by the second battalion in the early morning.

The Germans steadily gathered reënforcements, and the battle grew in intensity and fierce insistence. The advance, however,

went on. The second battalion was relieved about noon of the fifteenth, and the regiment went into reserve for a few days, when it was again ordered on its way and started off to the left of the Forest. It ended up in the Battle of Sedan on the day the armistice was signed. Then it went to the Rhine.

The last days of the war were days of great suffering for the regiment. It was continually out in the open in country eternally damp, marching through rain that drizzled through every hour of the twenty-four, days at a time, and the men who did not fall before bullets, gas or shells, succumbed to pneumonia. It was an entirely new outfit from the one with which I had left Camp Mills, which finally reached the German Rhine. But the "Fighting Irish" reached there, and they would have reached Berlin had Uncle Sam found it necessary to keep them on their way. The 165th, the

"Old Sixty-ninth," made regimental traditions in this war, which should rank it among the crack fighting organizations in the world should it be called upon to defend the Stars and Stripes again.

Life on an American Red Cross train is the Waldorf-Astoria phase of a soldier's life. We were three days on this train, and we forgot injuries and hardships in the enjoyment of its complete comforts. On the third day, we reached Base Hospital 27, outside of the town of Nantes. This town was not far from the seaport St. Nazaire.

We recited our pedigrees here and were assigned to different wards, I being sent for the first time to a surgical ward. Care of the men here was excellent. The meals were all that any doughboy could expect to enjoy at home, and much better, I guess, than some would have enjoyed during the war-time high cost of living. We were

given complete new outfits here, de-cootied for the last time, and fed and coddled soft and flabby again. Nothing so spoils a man for campaigning as an easy turn at a hospital.

There were Red Cross representatives here who watched over our out-of-the-routine needs. Among other things, they gave each of us a handy bag for the stowing of our war trophies and for the putting away of other articles. The Red Cross was one war organization which met its task in a big-hearted and efficient and quiet way. The money some organizations spent on publicity the Red Cross devoted to war work. It was a most generous friend.

Our wards at Base 27 were transformed barracks. They looked uninviting from without, but, as usual, were comfortable and homey within. Here one could get some idea of the cost of the war. The hospital

was filled to capacity, and a great many of the cases were cases of amputations. There was a great deal of suffering, of acute pain, in my ward, and it cut to the quick to hear the cries of the keenest sufferers.

I spent about three weeks in the hospital here, weeks in which I thought that I was preparing to go back to Class C duty for an indefinite number of months of war. Then the armistice came, and we all knew that we were bound for God's country.

The little town near the hospital went wild when the armistice was signed. There were hundreds of impromptu meetings held in its streets; the people paraded around the town all night long, and there was a brilliant illumination, the first that this little place had known in more than four years of war. The French women kissed the doughboys in the streets, and when this word got to the hospital every doughboy, no mat-

ter what his affliction, wanted a pass. The doctors, however, refused passes to most of the wounded, fearing that they might come to some further injuries in the jubilating crowd. From what I heard of the celebration, I judge that this was a wise decision.

There was no particular celebration or rejoicing in the hospital. The news that peace was near passed over the men without stirring much of a ripple. The doughboy had become hardened to all sorts of unexpected adventures, and peace was just one more such adventure. He took the news philosophically. He disbelieved it because his campaigning had made him mildly skeptical about everything. He claimed the victory for Pershing, if peace it was, and contented himself with the comment that the Old Man would make his own kind of a peace some day, even if the present one didn't go through. The doughboy in Base Hospital

27 received the news of the armistice very unemotionally.

The great event did not, on the other hand, go completely uncelebrated by us. The hospital authorities ransacked their pantries and served a holiday dinner in its honor. This was a most practical expression of enthusiasm as far as we were concerned. We enjoyed the dinner, and let the armistice go at that.

The halting of the war took on a little more material advantage in our eyes next day. Of course, I admit, the doughboy should have been fervent in his rejoicings that the terrible slaughter, the mocking wastage of men and materials, was over. But, then, the doughboy's profession was this same terrible slaughter and wastage. He viewed war, not through gentle humanitarian eyes, for then he would not have made a good soldier, but he viewed it stolidly,

stoically, in the same matter-of-fact, professional perspective that the dentist regards his work and its victims. So the thing that raised his enthusiasm for the armistice was not, on first impulse, a humanitarian emotion.

No! The doughboy expanded in thinking over the end of hostilities when it became clear to him that this meant going home. He was sick for the sight of America, for a taste of her foods and a look at her people again. Somehow, American supplies didn't taste the same in France as they had tasted at home. The air wasn't the same; the land didn't look the same; there was even something missing in the towns and the cities. If the armistice meant home, he considered, good ol' armistice.

We spent all our time after the peace in discussing, picturing, analyzing the homecoming. Then, one night, a list was called

out for transfer, and I was one of the lucky ones. I knew that this was a step on the way.

Our group left Base 27 at eight o'clock in the evening, by train, for Base Hospital 8. We had waited most impatiently for the hour of departure, but, when it came, all of us felt a bit as though we were leaving home in leaving Base 27. They had been very good to us here, and, anyway, most of us had forgotten just what real "home" was like.

We sang and cheered as we pulled out of the hospital yard; it was one of the most high-spirited parties that I had been with in France. And the reason? Well, we were to see Miss Liberty again, and that soon, and that was a sufficient reason.

Base Hospital 8 was reached about ten o'clock in the morning. Our beginning here was not of the best. In the first place, there

was a large arrival at the hospital that morning, including a long line of stretcher cases, and so we had to wait for several hours before passing through the Receiving Office. Naturally, all stretcher patients are taken care of first.

It was about noon before our group got through. Base 8 had Base Hospital 69 and Unit 6 amalgamated with it. My group was assigned to Base 69. This place was filled to capacity, and, as no notice of our coming had gone before us, no arrangements had been made for our accommodation. Finally, however, more beds were jammed into one of the wards and we were cared for thus.

We were assembled for mess about one o'clock. This mess was disappointing. It was the worst mess of any hospital of my experience in France. Probably supplies had run low. Anyhow, it was a rude shock

to us pampered patients to dine on simple field fare again, but this was all we had. We were greeted with corned willie, served in good old-fashioned style—sliced cold—and the coffee was just hot water. During our stay here, the mess did not improve. Some of the boys were so disappointed that they wanted to obtain permission to go to town to eat. We had become soft, indeed, at Base 27.

After a week here we were transferred to Unit 6, but still had to mess in the mess hall of Base 69. The day before Thanksgiving we were listed to board a train at seven that night for the seaport St. Nazaire. None of those of us on the list took this matter calmly. It was home, sure, this time.

There was just a wee speck in my broth, but this gave me considerable uneasiness. After all, my outfit was doing duty on the

Rhine, and I couldn't get over a feeling that that was where I ought to be. Then I feared that I would feel like one lost being away from army life. On campaign, the army becomes the *raison d'être* of one's being; one's outfit becomes one's home; the Company and Regiment, when one has been with it for months, becomes one's sheltering family, one's intimate circle of friends. It is hard to express, but the outfit you fight with, wherever it's stationed, becomes *the one* in the world in which you belong, to which you belong and which belongs to you.

We gave our last pedigree in France that evening; were given our disability cards, and at eight o'clock we entrained. We got away quickly; passed sleepless, confused nights, half delight and half regret, and then we felt the wonderful breeze of the ocean. We were side-tracked near the harbor and taken down to the docks on am-

bulances. The ambulances delivered us right at the foot of the gangplank.

I, for one, as I crossed that gangplank, stopped a moment and thought what it meant to be there.

We crossed over on a freight vessel to the United States Transport *Susquehanna.* Each of us, as he reached the deck, was checked off and assigned to a bunk. The ship was still unloading—wheat, rye, and oats—and there remained much of the work to do. We saw that we were not going to get out that day.

Mess kits and blankets were distributed and our compartment was lined up for mess at 12:30. It was a hot, lonely luncheon. We were all from different outfits, and each was leaving the old outfit for good. When I thought of this, I felt a disconsolate loneliness.

I thought of my pals on the line and

wished I were with them. I had always pictured coming home, provided I were lucky enough to come through, with my own outfit. This way was a bit disappointing.

In order to give expression to our mixture of sentiments, all of us gathered on deck after mess and complained bitterly that we had received no Thanksgiving turkey. It wasn't, however, so much the lack of turkey that caused our bitterness as it was our mixture of sentiments.

Next morning at four, the ship finished unloading and we pulled away from the dock about 10:30. This was the twenty-ninth. Frenchmen gathered on the bridge, which was swung to let us pass, cheered us and shouted to us. We held a short while beyond the bridge and then put out into a stormy sea.

The weather roughened as the days passed. On the fourth day the *Susque-*

hanna, which was a light ship and empty, started to rock and pitch. Few of us cared for this sort of thing much. Several of us got sick over it. For my part, I take naturally to mild seas.

When we got over the preoccupation with self that seasickness gives, we discussed among ourselves all hours of the day the only questions that mattered: "When would we get in?" and "Where would we get in?"

It took more than sixteen days to make the trip, and, when, at last, the information came that we were off Newport News, it was received with riot and tumult. The men immediately began to pack their things, and, then, all that night we watched for the coast; no German sniper had held our attention quite so absorbed as did the first lights we saw a-twinkle in the distance.

To say that these lights looked good to us is to do a violent restraint upon our emo-

tions in order to preserve decorous statement. I was looking at them and trying the quality of American air, when a voice at my shoulder expressed it all well: "Thank God, back to Civilization again!"

We were up with daylight next morning and sat down to a cold breakfast of corned willie with satisfaction. Then, we lit smokes and itched to set foot on the coast. We had plenty of smokes; for the officers on the ship had made up a pool, and from this had supplied us with tobacco and chocolate from the ship's canteen all the way over. This was appreciated more than the boys could tell them, because they had not been paid for some time and their money had given out.

While still in the waters off the coast we experienced again the bounty and thoughtfulness of the American Red Cross. A number of Red Cross workers came out to us in a tug, loaded with American goodies, with

chewing gum, tobacco, cake, fruits, and chocolate; and these things were passed out to us in liberal supply. These luxuries helped to bridge over a long time of waiting.

In the afternoon, some marines and members of the Naval Air Service were unloaded. We wondered when our turn would come. We learned later from the Red Cross that we were to pull into Newport News at six o'clock. We got all our belongings ready —somebody stole my Red Cross bag with my souvenirs—and expected to land that night. We were disappointed, however, and were disembarked next morning about eight o'clock.

We were taken from the ship in ambulances to Camp Stewart Hospital in Virginia, and each one of us enjoyed to the full every breath of the way. In the Receiving Office at the hospital we were met by a Red Cross worker, who told each of

us that he hoped we would get home for Christmas. We were home again and this was the right kind of cheer. "Hell, Heaven or Hoboken by Christmas," had come true for us.

Camp Stewart was a splendid hospital. The Red Cross had a large recreation room here and they arranged for the best kind of entertainment, including good vaudeville acts. We all received our pay here up to date, because a paymaster was willing to work all night in order that none should fail in being paid off. Then the officers of the hospital came through the wards to make sure that we had good clothes to go home in. It was such kindnesses that made home-coming doubly sweet.

I was but a short time at Camp Stewart, when I was sent to Camp Dix for discharge. We traveled to Camp Dix in style the like of which confused the doughboy accustomed

to cattle cars. Uncle Sam carried us in regular Pullmans, and Red Cross workers met us at every station with all manner of luxuries. It was a wonderful trip.

We reached Camp Dix on December 23. I put in an immediate request for leave over Christmas and New Year's, and, as this was granted, I left the sheltering precincts of the army for the first time in more than a year and a half and started for home. I reached home on Christmas Eve.

CHAPTER XIV

MY OUTFIT

EACH soldier fondly thinks that *his* organization is the best. He thinks that his company is the best company in the army; his battalion the best of all battalions; his regiment quite the best regiment that ever marched and fought; his division the deciding factor in the war, however great the war may be, and his country incomparably superior to any living or storied country. If he did not feel this way, he would not be a good soldier; he would not be a winning soldier.

Whatever my other merits as a soldier might have been, I, at least, shared in this viewpoint of the true soldier. I regarded my company as a shade better than all

others; my regiment, the 165th, as the greatest regiment in France, and my division, The Rainbow, as the finest fighting organization produced in the whole World War. This, then, is my apology for a brief recapitulation of my regiment's record in the war of all the Powers.

My regiment went to France filled with a pride in its traditions which worked strongly to buoy the men over the tight places. It went to France with a confidence in itself that nothing could dampen or diminish, and with an unshakable confidence in its country, heightened and strengthened, no doubt, by the fact that it, in the past, had been of signal service to the country. In fact I'm afraid that most of us went to war with a feeling that New York City, if put to it, could whip the armies of the Kaiser single-handed. The spirits of the

outfit were high; they even withstood the drudgery of our obscure training camp.

The good humor and high spirits of the outfit lasted through to the armistice, through sleeplessness, through exhaustion that seemed to make every nerve wither and shrivel, through hunger and unpleasant rations, through barrages inactively borne and through charges over land swept by shells, gas and machine guns. This spirit was not something of us in the regiment, but was something infectious of our organization's traditions.

The path of the 165th in France, the way of the "Fighting Irish," was the way of Uncle Sam's triumphs. It grew with the American Expeditionary Force in fighting power, and it went with this force, step by step, through its most signal battles and victories. It was "in at the death" and it took

its part in the great American strokes which made that death assured.

Seasoned on one of the hardest "hikes" that fell to the lot of any American regiment in France and in an unexpectedly lively initiation in trench warfare in the Lunéville sector, the regiment moved to catch and break the very crest of the frenzied German *nach Paris* wave in the Champagne. It emerged an organization of picked "shock" troops; was hurried to Château Thierry, where it acted as the hammerhead to open the great American drive which finally broke the Germans' pride and their heart. The "old 69th" came out of the hell on the Ourcq a fully welded crack-fighting American organization.

Transferred to St. Mihiel, the regiment romped over this important sector, with other American organizations, which sector had first been made shell-drunken by the

terrible deluge of explosives with which our artillery had saturated it in preparation. Then the regiment was withdrawn and thrown into the Argonne Forest, into the sharp, breathless fighting which rushed the Germans out of France and carried the war to a brilliant end.

In this forest, famous throughout military history as an impregnable line for defense, the 165th smashed the vaunted Kriemhilde line at Grand Pré, and, stroke on stroke, it cut the spinal nerve of the enemy's resistance, the Sedan-Metz railway, surging on November 7, the last time through a scorching inferno, over Hill 346, before Sedan, with steel. This promontory the 165th charged with bayonets. With its capture there remained for them the triumphal march to the Rhine.

Not quite two-thirds of the regiment that left home was able to be "in at the finish,"

the other third having paid their lives for the honor and safety of the proudest of countries or having been returned home as incapacitated for further duty by reason of serious wounds.

Life on the Rhine, my comrades tell, was a time of lazy routine and resting up. There were no more days of starving rations, of the keeping of weird hours, of long, dusty hikes, or made floundering over doughy roads under leaden, water-soaked packs. My comrades say they got "soft" again during their time of keeping order in the occupied territory of the enemy.

For the regiment, the order home came as the "beginning of a perfect day." It turned its back upon Europe without a regret and counted the seconds until its crowning war experiences—the sighting again of "Miss Liberty" and the home-coming parade up Fifth avenue. The setting foot on home

shores again, the familiar sights and the familiar feel of civilization once more was in itself sufficient reward for the hard service abroad. The warm welcome given to the regiment on Fifth avenue by people from all over the country was the good measure which made the cup of contentment run over.

There were 615 gold stars on the white banner which led the regiment up the avenue, each star for a valiant comrade who "went West" in the winning of the decisive fields in France. There were about 2,000 of the 3,600 men who went from Camp Mills to France in the ranks of the parading regiment, and scores of these wore the ribbons of the Croix de Guerre and of the Distinguished Service Cross. And about 800 of the regiment's wounded, who had been invalided home in casual companies, brought up the rear as a fifth battalion.

This parade closed the latest chapter of the regiment's service, and throughout that chapter the old organization was true to its proud tradition, a tradition that reaches back to the founding of the Sixty-ninth in 1851, and that was maintained in fifty battles of the Civil War and forty-four battles of the World War—"It never disobeyed an order; it never lost a flag!"

NORTH SEA
ENGLAND
DOVER
STRAIT OF DOVER
ENGLISH CHANNEL
CALAIS
BOULOGNE
DUNKIRK
OSTEND
YSER R.
YPRES
LYS R.
Sheldt R.
BELGIUM
BR
LILLE
MONS
CHARLER
LENS
VIMY RIDGE
VALENCIENNES
Sambre R.
DOUAI
ARRAS
CAMBRAI
MAUBEUGE
50°
DIEPPE
ALBERT
AMIENS
SOMME R.
PERONNE
MEZIERES
ST. QUENTIN
LA FERE
MONTDIDIER
ST. GOBAIN FOREST
NOYON
LAON
CHEMIN DES DAMES
Aisne R.
LIANCOURT
Oise
SOISSONS
REIMS
SENLIS
CHATEAU THIERRY
Seine R.
PARIS
MARNE R.
EPERNAY
CHA.
FRANCE
River
Seine R.
48°
2°
EAS